TRANSLATION

OF THE

LETTERS

OF A

HINDOO RAJAH;

WRITTEN

PREVIOUS TO, AND DURING THE PERIOD OF HIS RESIDENCE IN ENGLAND.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION

ON THE

HISTORY, RELIGION, AND MANNERS,

OF THE

HINDOOS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY ELIZA HAMILTON. (Elizabeth) Miss

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LETTERS

OF A

HINDOO RAJAH.

ERRATA.

Page 4,	Line 10,	*for* Mens *read* them
12,	21,	*for* had *read* he
33,	14,	*for* degraded *read* degrading
53,	18,	*for* Zamareanda *read* Zamarcanda
57,	18,	*for* Zamareanda *read* Zamarcanda
62,	13,	*for* man *read* them
70,	14,	*for* that *read* the
89,	3,	*for* Mahammed *read* Mahommed
90,	1,	*for* Mayo *read* Maya
120,	17,	*for* Bahan *read* Bahar
133,	8,	*for* Nircarrahs *read* Hircarrahs
142,	1,	*for* derees *read* decrees
144,	10,	*for* ſacrificed *read* ſacrifices
152,	2,	*for* Dank *read* Dauk
154,	7,	*for* arts *read* acts
186,	in the note,	*for* Aikbery *read* Ackbery
189,	5,	*for* between *read* with
208,	6,	*for* recreation *read* reconciliation
212,	7,	*for* zena *read* veena
213,	1,	*for* Arcaa *read* Archa
215,	21,	*for* he *read* we
220,	8,	*for* as *read* in
226,	8,	*for* Mumud *read* Muſmud

BRITISH MUSEUM
1886

TO

WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.

LATE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF BENGAL.

UNDER WHOSE AUSPICES,

AS THE DISTINGUISHED PATRON OF SHANSCRIT, AND PERSIAN LITERATURE,

THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE ORIENTAL TRANSLATIONS, HAVE HITHERTO APPEARED.

TO HIM,

AS THE HONOURED PATRON, AND FRIEND, OF A

BELOVED, AND MUCH LAMENTED BROTHER,

IS THIS TRIFLE,

(AS A SINCERE, THOUGH HUMBLE TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM, AND GRATITUDE)

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS MUCH OBLIGED,

AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

London,
June 6, 1796.

ELIZA HAMILTON.

31 X

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

IN the extenſive plan which is carried on under the direction of the great Governor of the Univerſe, an attentive obſerver will frequently perceive the moſt unexpected ends, accompliſhed by means the moſt improbable, and events branch out into effects which were neither foreſeen, nor intended by the agents which produceed them. A ſlight view of the conſequences which have hitherto reſulted from our

intercourſe with the Eaſt-Indies, will ſufficiently evince the truth of this aſſertion.

The thirſt of conqueſt and the deſire of gain, which firſt drew the attention of the moſt powerful, and enlightened nations of Europe toward the fruitful regions of Hindooſtan, have been the means of opening ſources of knowledge and information to the learned, and the curious, and have added to the ſtock of the literary world, treaſures, which if not ſo ſubſtantial, are of a nature more permanent than thoſe which have enriched the commercial.

The many elegant tranſlations from the different Oriental languages with which the world has been favoured within theſe laſt few years, have not failed to attract

merited attention; and the curioſity awakened by theſe productions, concerning the people with whom they originated, has been gratified by the labours of men, who have enjoyed the firſt rank in literary fame.

Still, however, the writers in every branch of Oriental literature, have to contend with diſadvantages, too numerous and too powerful to be eaſily overcome. The names of the Heroes of Greece and Rome, are rendered familiar at a period of life, when the mind receives every impreſſion with facility, and tenaciouſly retains the impreſſions it receives. With the name of every Hero, the idea of his character is aſſociated, and the whole becomes afterward ſo connected in the mind, with the

bliſsful period of life at which it was firſt received, that the recollected ſcenes of juvenile felicity may frequently, even in the moſt accompliſhed minds, be found to give a zeſt to the charms of the ancient authors. To thoſe, who have not had the advantages of an early claſſical education, the ſame objections which render the tranſlations from the Oriental writers tireſome, and unintereſting, will operate with equal force on the moſt beautiful paſſages of Homer, or Virgil, and the names of Glaucus and Sarpedon, of Anchiſes and Eneas, be found as hard to remember, and as difficult to pronounce, as thoſe of Kriſhna and Arjoun.

Of theſe advantages, reſulting from early prepoſſeſſions, the Perſian and Hin-

doo writers are entirely deſtitute, and the difficulty of reconciling the ſounds of the names of their Heroes to an European ear is ſo great, that it is not till after a greater degree of attention than the generality of readers will beſtow, that any appropriate idea of them can be fixed in the mind. This appears to be at leaſt one cauſe of that ignorance, and apathetic indifference with regard to the affairs of the Eaſt, which is frequently to be remarked in minds, that are in every other reſpect highly cultivated, and accurately informed. For the ſake of readers of this deſcription, particularly thoſe of my own ſex, who may have been deterred by reaſons above hinted at, from ſeeking information from a more copious ſource, I think it neceſſary toward explaining many paſſages in the

letters of the Rajah, which would otherwiſe have appeared utterly unintelligible, to give a ſhort and ſimple ſketch of the hiſtory of the nation to which they belonged. Should my feeble effort lead to further enquiry; ſhould it in the mind of any perſon of taſte give birth to a laudable curioſity, upon a ſubject where ſo much is to be learned, my deſign will be ſtill more fully anſwered, and my wiſhes more completely fulfilled.

That part of Aſia, known to Europeans by the name of Hindooſtan, extends from the mountains of Thibet on the North, to the ſea on the South, and from the river Indus on the Weſt, to the Barampooter on the Eaſt, comprehending, within its limits, a variety of provinces, many

of which have been famous, from the earlieſt ages, for the ſalubrity of their climate, the richneſs of their productions, and the fertility of their ſoil. Of this country, the Hindoos * are the Aborigines. Over the origin of this celebrated people, Time has caſt the impenetrable mantle of oblivion. Their own annals trace it back to a period

* The word *Hind*, from whence *Hindoo*, and Hindooſtan, or country of the Hindoos, is of Perſian origin, computed by Colonel Dow to have been derived from Hind, a ſuppoſed ſon of Ham, the ſon of Noah; and by other Orientaliſts, to owe its origin to the river Indus. For the ſake of ſuch as take pleaſure in tracing etymologies, I inſert a note written on the margin of the copy of Gentoo Laws, now in my poſſeſſion, by one whoſe knowledge of the Perſian language has not been excelled by any. He ſays, 'The word *Hind* is often uſed by the Perſian Poets to 'ſignify *Black*, or *dark-coloured*, and it is probable that 'Hindos may mean no more than a *black man*, as our 'negro from *Niger*.'

ſo remote, ſo far beyond the date of European Chronology, as to be rejected by European pride. The magnificent proofs of ancient grandeur, however, which are ſtill to be found, and which have been ſought for with the moſt ſucceſsful aſſiduity, by many of our countrymen in India, give the moſt irrefragable teſtimony of the antiquity of their Empire, and ſeem to confirm the aſſertion of its Hiſtorians, 'that 'its duration is not to be paralelled by the 'hiſtory of any other portion of the human 'race.' To account for this extraordinary degree of permanency, we muſt direct our attention, not to the barriers formed by nature around their territories, but to thoſe internal cauſes ariſing from the *nature of their Government, their Laws, Religion, moral Prejudices*, and eſtabliſhed manners.

The ancient government, throughout Hindooſtan, appears to have been a federative union of the various ſtates, each governed by its own Rajah, or Chief, but ſubjected, in a ſort of feudal vaſſalage, to the ſovereignty of the ſupreme Emperor, who was head of the whole.

The manner in which the Rajahs of the Hindoos exerciſed the rights of dominion over their people, bears ſo little analogy to that practiſed by the petty ſovereigns of ſuch European ſtates as are placed in circumſtances nearly ſimilar; that it would be doing the greateſt injuſtice to the amiable and benevolent character of the Hindoos, to bring them into compariſon. *There* the right of ſovereignty bore the mild aſpect of parental authority. The

Prince conſidered the people in the light of children, whom he was appointed by Heaven to protect and cheriſh; and the affection of the ſubject for the Prince, under whoſe auſpices he enjoyed the bleſſings of freedom, and tranquility, was heightened by eſteem for his virtues, into the moſt inviolable attachment *.

* The deſcriptions of the Poet, may ſometimes be called in to juſtify, and illuſtrate, the aſſertions of the Hiſtorian. In this light, the following paſſage from the beautiful drama of Sacontala, which was performed at the court of an Indian Monarch, celebrated for his love of the arts, and the encouragement he gave to polite literature in the firſt century before Chriſt, may not be unacceptable. 'There ſits the 'King of men, who has felicity at command, yet 'ſhews equal reſpect to all: here no ſubject, even 'of the loweſt claſs, is received with contempt.' ——'Thou ſeekeſt not thy own pleaſure, no, it is 'for the people thou art haraſſed from day to day.' ——'When thou wieldeſt the rod of juſtice, thou 'bringeſt to order, all thoſe who have deviated from

The diviſion of the Hindoos into four *Caſts*, or tribes, to each of which a particular ſtation was allotted, and peculiar duties were aſſigned, might doubtleſs be another cauſe, which lent its aid toward the preſervation of the general harmony. This diviſion muſt have been made at a period too remote for inveſtigation; and which ſeems to ſet conjecture at defiance. It is by the Hindoo writers wrapt in the veil of allegory; they ſay, that Brahma, the firſt perſon in their Triad of Deity, having received the power from the Supreme for the creation of mankind, created the Hindoos in the following manner:

' the paths of virtue: thou biddeſt contention ceaſe:
' thou waſt formed for the preſervation of thy peo-
' ple; thy kindred poſſeſs, indeed, conſiderable wealth;
' but ſo boundleſs is thy affection, that *all thy ſubjects,*
' *are conſidered by thee as thy kinſmen.*'

From his mouth he produced the Bramin, and deſtined his rank to be the moſt eminent; allotting, for his buſineſs, the performance of the rights of Religion, and the inſtruction of mankind in the path of duty.

The next tribe he created was the Khettrie, or war tribe, and this he produced from his arms, his duty being *to defend the people, to govern*, and to command; of this tribe were the ancient Rajahs.

He next produced the Bice, or Banyan, from his thighs and belly, aſſigning him the occupations of *agriculture*, and commerce. And laſtly,

He created from his feet the tribe of Sooder, and to him allotted the duties of *ſubjection, labour*, and *obedience*.

The reſpective, and peculiar virtues of theſe different Caſts, are admirably deſcribed in the following paſſage of the Bhagvat Geeta, an epiſode, from their great epic poem, tranſlated into Engliſh by Mr. Wilkins.

'The natural duty of the Bramin is 'peace, ſelf-reſtraint, patience, rectitude, 'wiſdom, and learning. The natural du- 'ties of the Khettrie, are bravery, glory, 'not to flee from the field; rectitude, ge- 'neroſity, and princely conduct. The 'natural duties of the Bice are to cultivate 'the land, to tend the cattle, and to buy 'and ſell. The natural duties of the Soo- 'der is ſervitude; a man by following the 'duties appointed by his birth, cannot do 'wrong. *A man being contented with his*

'own particular ſituation obtaineth perfec-
'tion.'

Though all Bramins are not Prieſts, none but ſuch as are of this Caſt can perform any offices of the prieſtly function. The members of every other Caſt preſerve for theirs the moſt reſpectful veneration, and a ſpirit of partiality toward them ſeems to breath throughout their laws, as well as religious inſtitutions.

Thoſe who take pleaſure in pointing the ſhafts of ſarcaſm againſt the order of the Prieſthood (without conſidering, that invectives againſt any ſociety of individuals, are only ſatires upon human nature) will readily aſſign to the Bramins themſelves, the formation of laws which appear ſo fa-

vourable to their intereſts; and produce it as an additional proof of prieſtly cunning and ambition; but a moment's reflection on the duties, as well as privileges, of this Caſt, will put an end to invidious exultation.

An abhorrence of the ſhedding of blood, is a principle which pervades the whole of the Hindoo religion, but the Bramins obſerve it in the ſtricteſt degree. They eat nothing that has life in it: their food conſiſting entirely of fruit and vegetables, and their only luxury being the milk of the Cow, an animal for whoſe ſpecies they have a particular veneration. Not only every act of hoſtility, but even every method of defence is, to them, ſtrictly prohibited; ſubmitting to violence with unre-

ſiſting patience and humility, they leave it to God, and their Rajahs, to avenge whatever injuries they may ſuſtain.

The ſeparation of the different Caſts from each other is abſolute and irreverſible; it forms the fundamental principle of their laws, and the ſlighteſt breach of it never falls to incur univerſal reprobation.

Thus thoſe ſources of diſquiet, which have held moſt of the empires of the earth in a ſtate of perpetual agitation, were unknown to the peaceful children of Brahma. The turbulence of ambition, the emulations of envy, and the murmurs of diſcontent, were equally unknown to a people, where each individual, following the occupation, and walking in the ſteps of his fa-

thers, conſidered it as his primary duty to keep in the ſituation that he firmly believed to have been marked out for him by the hand of Providence.

In the ſpirit of the religion of the Hindoos, a ſtill more efficient cauſe, of the durability of their ſtate, preſents itſelf to our view. Original in its nature, and abſolute in its decrees, its precepts induce a total ſecluſion from the reſt of mankind. Far, however, from diſturbing thoſe who are of a different faith, by endeavours to convert them, it does not even admit of proſelytes to its own. Though tenacious of their own doctrines, in a degree that is unexampled in the hiſtory of any other religion, the moſt fervent zeal in the moſt pious Hindoos, leads them neither to hate,

nor deſpiſe, nor pity ſuch as are of a different belief, nor does it ſuffer them to conſider others as leſs favoured by the Almighty than themſelves. This ſpirit of unbounded toleration proceeded in a natural courſe from the ſublime and exalted notions of the Deity, taught by the Bramins, and every where to be met with in their writings, and which are only equalled in that Goſpel 'which brought life and 'immortality to light.'

That Being whom they diſtinguiſh by the different appellations of the Principle of Truth, the Spirit of Wiſdom! the Supreme! by whom the Univerſe was ſpread abroad, whoſe perfections none can graſp within the limited circle of human ideas, views, they ſay, with equal complacency,

all who are ſtudious to perform his will throughout the immenſe family of creation. They deem it derogatory to the character of this Being, to ſay that he prefers one religion to another, 'to ſuppoſe ſuch preference, being the height of impiety, as it would be ſuppoſing injuſtice toward thoſe whom he left ignorant of his will:' and they therefore conclude that every religion is peculiarly adapted to the country and people where it is practiſed *. The Bramins, who compiled the Code of Gentoo Laws, tranſlated by Mr. Halhed, explain their opinion upon this ſubject in very explicit terms: 'the truly intelligent, 'ſay they) well know that the differen-'ces and varieties of created things are a 'ray of his glorious eſſence, and that the

* See Crawford's Sketches.

'contrarieties of conſtitutions are types of 'his wonderful attributes. He appointed 'to each Tribe its own faith, and to every 'Sect its own religion, and views, in each 'particular place, the mode of worſhip re-'ſpectively appointed it. Sometimes he 'is employed, with the attendants upon 'the Moſque, in counting the ſacred beads; 'ſometimes he is in the Temple at the 'adoration of Idols, the intimate of the 'Muſſulman, and the friend of the Hin-'doo, the companion of the Chriſtian, and 'the confidant of the Jew.'

A toleration founded upon ſuch ſyſte-matic principles, would neceſſarily exclude thoſe argumentative diſputations, thoſe cru-el and obſtinate animoſities, which, alas! under a diſpenſation whoſe very eſſence is

benevolence, have ſo often diſturbed the peace of ſociety. There the acrimonious cenſure, the keen retort, the vehement invective againſt thoſe who differed in opinion, was totally unknown. Under the banners of their religion, the iraſcible paſſions were never ranged. 'He, my 'ſervant,' ſays Kriſhna, ſpeaking in the perſon of the Deity, 'He, my ſervant, is 'dear to me, who is *free from enmity*, mer-'ciful, and exempt from pride and ſelfiſh-'neſs, and who is the ſame in pain and in 'pleaſure, patient of wrongs, contented, 'and whoſe mind is fixed on me alone.'

I ſhall conclude this account of the notions of the Deity, entertained by the Hindoos, with the firſt ſtanza of that beautiful Hymn to Narrayána, or the Spirit of

God exerted in Creation, tranſlated by the elegant pen of Sir William Jones.

' Spirit of Spirits! who through every part,
' Of ſpace expanded, and of endleſs time,
' Beyond the ſtretch of lab'ring thought ſublime,
' Bad'ſt uproar into beauteous order ſtart,
' Before Heaven was, Thou art:
' Ere ſpheres beneath us roll'd, or ſpheres above,
' Ere Earth in firmamental ether hung,
' Thou ſat'ſt alone, till through thy myſtic love,
' Things unexiſting to exiſtence ſprung,
' And grateful deſcant ſung,
' What firſt impell'd Thee to exert thy might?
' Goodneſs unlimited.—What glorious light
' Thy powers directed? Wiſdom without bound
' What prov'd it firſt? Oh! guide my fancy right,
' Oh raiſe from cumb'rous ground
' My ſoul, in rapture drown'd,

‘ That fearleſs it may ſoar on wings of fire;
‘ For Thou, who only know'ſt, Thou only
can'ſt inſpire.

A further view of their religious ſyſtem may be neceſſary, and will, perhaps, be ſufficient to elucidate another characteriſtic feature of the Hindoos, which has forcibly ſtruck all who have had an opportunity of obſerving them. The patience evinced by this mild and gentle race under the ſevereſt ſuffering, and the indifference with which they view the approach of death, which has been ſeverally aſſigned to conſtitutional apathy, to their mode of living, and to the delicate texture of their bodies, may perhaps be equally accounted for, from their firm and ſtedfaſt belief in a future ſtate. This belief, indeed, is dark-

ened by many errors. They believe that the human ſoul muſt be purified by ſuffering, and that it is not till after having undergone this expiatory diſcipline through a ſeries of different bodies, that it becomes worthy of admiſſion to eternal happineſs. The evils inflicted upon the ſeemingly inoffenſive, is attributed by them as a puniſhment for crimes committed in a preexiſtent ſtate. Revolting from the idea of eternal puniſhment, as incompatible with the juſtice and goodneſs of their Creator, they believe that the ſouls of the wicked, after having been for a time confined in Narekha (the infernal regions) are ſent back upon the ſtage of life, to animate the bodies of the inferior creation, till by various chaſtiſements and tranſmigrations in theſe probationary ſtates, every vicious

inclination is ſufficiently corrected to admit of their reception into the regions of perfection and happineſs. 'Animated by the 'deſire of obtaining that final boon,' ſays a late Hiſtorian *, 'and fired by all the 'glorious promiſes of their religion, the 'patient Hindoo ſmiles amid unutterable 'miſery, and exults in every dire variety 'of voluntary torture.'

Notwithſtanding the ſublime notions of the Hindoo concerning Deity; and, notwithſtanding the ſtrenuous aſſertions of the beſt informed Bramins, even at the preſent day, that their worſhip is only directed to one divine eſſence, and that the many inferior deities, whoſe images fill their temples, are but ſo many emblems

* See Maurice's Antiquities.

of his different attributes, it muſt be confeſſed, that the religion of the vulgar has degenerated into the groſſeſt idolatry. This may be accounted for by the jealous care with which the tribe of Brahma prevented the intruſion of the multitude into theſe avenues to ſcience and to truth, of which they were the peculiar guardians *. Ignorance naturally leads to ſuperſtition, and the vulgar of all ranks, fixing their attention on the external object that is preſented to them, loſe ſight of the more remote and ſpiritual alluſion, and ſoon tranſfer that veneration to the ſymbol, which was at firſt meant only to be excited for the thing ſignified. Nor is it in the religion of Hindooſtan alone, that ſimilar ef-

* See Introduction to the Gentoo Laws.

fects are produced by cauſes of a like nature.

To enter upon the diſquiſition of a ſubject, ſo extenſive and ſo intricate as that of Hindoo Mythology, would be to wander far from the purpoſe of the preſent Introduction: ſuch an idea of it, however, as may ſerve to elucidate ſome paſſages in the Letters of the Rajah, which allude to their divinities, may be deemed neither unneceſſary, nor impertinent.

The firſt thing that preſents itſelf to our view is the Triad of Deity, Brimha, Veeſhna, and Seeva, under which form is repreſented the three great attributes of the Almighty—Power to create, Goodneſs to preſerve, and Juſtice to puniſh. The long

liſt of the inferior Deities, which follow, exhibit ſuch a ſtriking ſimilitude in their character and offices to the ancient Gods of Greece and Rome, that it has led to a conjecture of their being actually the ſame, and an attempt has been made by a writer of equal taſte and erudition, to prove their identity, and to trace their wanderings through the mazes of Grecian and Egyptian lore. Of the members of this numerous Pantheon, it will be ſufficient for our purpoſe to mention the few following.

The firſt in rank is Ganeſa, the God of Wiſdom, who is thought to be the Janus of the Grecian Mythology; Carticeya, the God of War, whoſe proweſs is not inferior to that of the Mars of Rome. Seraſ-

wattee, the Goddeſs of Letters, and Protectreſs of Arts and Sciences, whoſe inſignia, the Palmyra Leaf, and the Reed or Pen (implements uſed in writing) are ſurely more appropriate to her character, than the Shield and Lance which graced the Minerva of the Greeks. Cama, or the God of Love, is ſaid, by Sir William Jones, to be the twin brother of the Grecian Cupid, with richer and more lively appendages. And, indeed, if we form our notions of this fabulous divinity from the beautiful Ode addreſſed to him, by an ancient Hindoo bard, we muſt confeſs his ſuperiority to be very evident *. And,

* Hymn to Camdeo; tranſlated by Sir William Jones.

" The God, to whom the following poem is addreſſed, appears the ſame with the Grecian *Eros* and

laſtly, Surraya, or the God of Day, who, in his chariot, drawn by ſeven green horſes, bears ſo near a reſemblance to Apollo, that

the Roman *Cupido*; but the *Indian* deſcription of his perſon and arms, his family, attendants, and attributes, has new and peculiar beauties. His bow of ſugar-cane or flowers, with a ſtring of bees, and his *five* arrows, each pointed with an *Indian* bloſſom of a heating quality, are allegories equally new and beautiful."

THE HYMN.

WHAT potent God from *Agra*'s orient bow'rs
Floats thro' the lucid air, while living flow'rs,
With ſunny twine the vocal arbours wreathe,
And gales enamour'd heav'nly fragrance breathe?
Hail pow'r unknown! for at thy beck
Vales and groves their boſoms deck,
And ev'ry laughing bloſſom dreſſes
With gems of dew his muſky treſſes.
I feel, I feel thy genial flame divine,
And hallow thee, and kiſs thy ſhrine.

Theſe will ſerve to give the reader ſome idea of the numerous divinities, whoſe

And in her train twelve blooming girls advance,
Touch golden ſtrings, and knit the mirthful dance.
Thy dreaded implements they bear,
And wave them in the ſcented air,
Each with pearls her neck adorning,
Brighter than the tears of morning.
Thy crimſon enſign which before them flies,
Decks with new ſtars the ſapphire ſkies.

God of the flow'ry ſhafts, and flow'ry bow,
Delight of all above and all below!
Thy lov'd companion, conſtant from his birth,
In heav'n clyp'd *Beſſent*, and gay *Spring* on earth,
Weaves thy green robe and flaunting bow'rs,
And from thy clouds draws balmy ſhow'rs,
He with freſh arrows fills thy quiver,
(Sweet the gift, and ſweet the giver!)
And bids the many-plumed warbling throng
Burſt the pent bloſſoms with their ſong.

He bends the luſcious cane, and twiſts the ſtring
With bees, how ſweet! but ah, how keen their ſting!

two pages misplaced

it is impoſſible not to recogniſe them as the ſame.

'Know'ſt thou not me?' Celeſtial ſounds I hear!
'Know'ſt thou not me? Ah, ſpare a mortal ear!
'Behold'—my ſwimming eyes entranc'd I raiſe,
But oh! they ſhrink before th' exceſſive blaze.
Yes, ſon of *Maya*, yes, I know,
Thy blooming ſhafts, and cany bow,
Cheeks with youthful glory beaming,
Locks in braids etherial ſtreaming,
Thy ſcaly ſtandard, thy myſterious arms,
And all thy pains and all thy charms.

God of each lovely ſight, each lovely ſound,
Soul-kindling, world-inflaming, ſtar-ycrown'd,
Eternal *Cama!* Or doth *Smara* bright,
Or proud *Ananga* give thee more delight?
Whate'er thy ſeat, whate'er thy name,
Seas, earth, and air thy name proclaim;
Wreathy ſmiles and roſeate pleaſures,
Are thy richeſt, ſweeteſt treaſures.
All animals to thee their tribute bring,
And hail thee univerſal king.

Thy conſort mild, *Affection* ever true,
Graces thy ſide, her veſt of glowing hue,

laſtly, Surraya, or the God of Day, who, in his chariot, drawn by ſeven green horſes, bears ſo near a reſemblance to Apollo, that

the Roman *Cupido*; but the *Indian* deſcription of his perſon and arms, his family, attendants, and attributes, has new and peculiar beauties. His bow of ſugar-cane or flowers, with a ſtring of bees, and his *five* arrows, each pointed with an *Indian* bloſſom of a heating quality, are allegories equally new and beautiful."

THE HYMN.

WHAT potent God from *Agra*'s orient bow'rs
Floats thro' the lucid air, while living flow'rs,
With ſunny twine the vocal arbours wreathe,
And gales enamour'd heav'nly fragrance breathe?
Hail pow'r unknown! for at thy beck
Vales and groves their boſoms deck,
And ev'ry laughing bloſſom dreſſes
With gems of dew his muſky treſſes.
I feel, I feel thy genial flame divine,
And hallow thee, and kiſs thy ſhrine.

images are worſhipped in the temples of the Hindoos, and to whoſe honour feſti-

He with five flow'rets tips the ruthleſs darts,
Which thro' five ſenſes pierce enraptur'd hearts:
Strong *Chumpa*, rich in od'rous gold,
Warm *Amer*, nurs'd in heav'nly mould,
Dry *Nagkeſer*, in ſilver ſmiling,
Hot *Kiticum*, our ſenſe beguiling;
And laſt, to kindle fierce the ſcorching flame,
Loveſhafts which Gods bright *Bela* name.

Can men reſiſt thy pow'r, when *Kriſhen* yields;
Kriſhen, who ſtill in *Matra*'s holy fields
Tunes harps immortal, and to ſtrains divine,
Dances by moonlight with the *Gopia* nine?
But when thy daring arm untam'd
At *Mahadeo* a loveſhaft aim'd,
Heav'n ſhook, and, ſmit with ſtony wonder,
Told his deep dread in burſts of thunder,
While on thy beauteous limbs an azure fire,
Blaz'd forth, which never muſt expire.

O thou for ages born, yet ever young,
For ages may thy *Bramin*'s lay be ſung!
And when thy lory ſpreads his em'rald wings
To waft thee high above the tow'rs of kings;

vals are celebrated, and votive offerings of fruits and flowers are preſented.

The peculiar conſtruction of the Hindoo government, and the precepts of Hindoo faith, though admirably calculated for the preſervation of their empire in happineſs and tranquillity, were not ſo favourable to the cultivation of the mind, and to its advancement in the paths of uſeful knowledge.

To expand the faculties of the human ſoul the paſſions muſt be called into action,

While o'er thy throne the moon's pale light,
Pours her ſoft radiance thro' the night,
And to each floating cloud diſcovers,
The haunts of bleſt or joyleſs lovers,
Thy mildeſt influence to thy bard impart,
To warm, but not conſume, his heart.

nor can any of theſe be laid under ſuch reſtraint, as dooms them to lie for ever dormant, without injuring the powers of the mind.

In the ſtruggle of contending intereſts, though peace is ſometimes loſt, intellectual energy is rouſed, and while the ſtrife of emulation, and reſtleſſneſs of ambition, diſturb the quiet of ſociety, they produce, in their colliſion, the genius that adorns it: it is accordingly pronounced, by one who muſt be allowed competent to the deciſion, that 'Reaſon and Taſte are the 'grand prerogatives of European minds, 'while the Aſiatics have ſoared to loftier 'heights in the ſphere of Imagination *.'

* See Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. 1.

But notwithſtanding all the diſadvantages under which they laboured, the many monuments that yet remain of their former ſplendour, the ſpecimens of their literature, and the productions of their manufactures, ſufficiently evince their advancement in the ſciences which dignify life, as well as in the arts that ornament it.

The Bramins, to whom the cultivation of ſcience was excluſively committed, ſeem to have made no contemptible uſe of their high privilege. In aſtronomy they are allowed to have excelled; many works of their ancient writers on metaphyſics, and ethics, have already come to our knowledge; and, ſurely, no lover of poetry can peruſe the ſpecimens of that divine

art, which have been preſented to the public in an Engliſh dreſs; without feeling a deſire to be more intimately acquainted with the productions of the Hindoo bards.

The degree of knowledge we already poſſeſs, concerning the antiquities of Hindooſtan, has not been attained without efforts of the moſt indefatigable aſſiduity. But what obſtacles are ſufficient to deter the ſpirit of literary curioſity? When ſupported by philoſophy, and guided by taſte, it ſeldom fails to ſubdue every difficulty, and to ſee its perſevering labours crowned with ſucceſs!

How much this obſervation has been verified in reſpect to the Aſiatic Society, is well known to all who have peruſed the

volumes of their Reſearches. It is thus briefly deſcribed by Mr. Maurice, in the Introduction to his Indian antiquities. 'The buried tablet has been dug from the 'bowels of the earth; the fallen, and 'mouldering pillar has been reared; coins, 'and medals, ſtruck in commemoration 'of grand, and important events, have 'been recovered from the ſepulchral dark-'neſs of two thouſand years; and the ob-'ſolete characters, engraved on their ſu-perficies, have, with immenſe toil, been 'decyphered and explained.'

In the contemplation of theſe ſcientific labours, the Governor General, under whoſe auſpices they were commenced, will have the deſerved meed of grateful acknowledgment from every candid and

philoſophic mind; for although he declined complying with the wiſhes of the members, who were all ſolicitous to ſee him at the head of their ſociety, he was eminently inſtrumental in promoting its ſucceſs; and in this, as in every other inſtance, he ſtood forth the ſteady friend, the liberal patron, and zealous promoter of uſeful knowledge.

How much the world has been indebted to the learned Gentleman who was nominated to the Preſidentſhip of the Society, is too well known to require animadverſion. Long and deeply will his loſs be deplored by every lover of literature, and friend to virtue.

A few of the original members of the Aſiatic Society*, ſtill continue to purſue the great object of their undertaking with unremitted ardour, and undiminiſhed ſucceſs. Of the reſt, ſome have returned to the boſom of their families, and native country, not enriched by the plunder, and ſplendid by the beggary and maſſacre of

* The names of the original members of the Aſiatic Society were as follows:

Sir William Jones, Knt. Preſident; Sir Robert Chambers, Knt. David Anderſon, James Anderſon, Francis Balfour, George Hilaro Barlow, John Briſtow, Ralph Broome, Reuben Barrow, Eſqrs. General John Carnac; William Chambers, Charles Chapman, Burnots Criſp, Charles Croftes, Jonathan Dunken, Eſqrs. Major William Davy; Jonathan Duncan, Francis Fowke, Francis Gladwin, Thomas Graham, Charles Hamilton, Thomas Law, John David Paterſon, Jonathan Scot, Henry Vanſittart, and Charles Wilkins, Eſqrs.

their fellow-creatures, as has been repreſented in the malevolent and illiberal harangues of indiſcriminating obloquy, but poſſeſſed of thoſe virtues which ennoble human nature, and that cultivation of mind and talents, which dignify the enjoyment of retirement. Others of that ſociety, equally honoured, and equally eſtimable, are, alas, no more! The generous eſteem, the cordial friendſhip, the warm admiration which accompanied them thro' life, has not been extinguiſhed in the ſilent grave; it lives, and will long live, in the hearts of many, calling forth the tear of tender recollection, and of unextinguiſhed, though, alas! unavailing ſorrow.

The reader of ſenſibility, will, it is hoped, pardon a digreſſion, into which

the writer has been betrayed, by feelings of which they know the power and influence, and from which ſhe haſtily returns, to remark that the happineſs enjoyed by the Hindoos under the mild and auſpicious government of their native Princes, and preſerved, without any material interruption, through ſuch a mighty period of revolving time, as ſtaggers the belief of the ever-fluctuating nations of Europe, was at length doomed to ſee its overthrow effected, by the reſiſtleſs fury of Fanatic zeal.

The impoſtor of Mecca had eſtabliſhed, as one of the principles of his doctrine, the merit of extending it, either by perſuaſion, or the ſword, to all parts of the earth. How ſteadily this injunction was adhered to by his followers, and with what

ſucceſs it was purſued, is well known to all, who are in the leaſt converſant in hiſtory.

The ſame overwhelming torrent, which had inundated the greater part of Africa, burſt its way into the very heart of Europe, and covered many kingdoms of Aſia with unbounded deſolation; directed its baleful courſe to the flouriſhing provinces of Hindooſtan. Here theſe fierce and hardy adventurers, whoſe only improvement had been in the ſcience of deſtruction, who added the fury of fanaticiſm to the ravages of war, found the great end of their conqueſts oppoſed, by obſtacles which neither the ardour of their perſevering zeal, nor ſavage barbarity could ſurmount. Multitudes were ſacrificed by the cruel

hand of religious perſecution, and whole countries were deluged in blood, in the vain hope, that by the deſtruction of a part, the remainder might be perſuaded, or terrified into the profeſſion of Mahommadeniſm: but all theſe ſanguinary efforts were ineffectual; and at length being fully convinced, that though they might extirpate, they could never hope to convert, any number of the Hindoos, they relinquiſhed the impracticable idea, with which they had entered upon their career of conqueſt, and contented themſelves with the acquirement of the civil dominion and almoſt univerſal empire of Hindooſtan.

In theſe provinces, where the Muſſulman juriſdiction was fully eſtabliſhed, Muſſulman courts of juſtice were erected.

The laws which the Hindoos had for numberleſs ages been accuſtomed to revere, as of divine authority, were ſet aſide, and all cauſes judged and decided by the ſtandard of Muſſulman juriſprudence; an evil which appeared to the unhappy Hindoo more formidable than the extortions of avarice, or the devaſtations of cruelty *. Nor was the effect of theſe latter paſſions unfelt, the peculiar puniſhment of forfeiting their Caſt, which is attached by their law to the moſt temporary and ſeemingly trivial deviation from its precepts, and which involves in it the dreadful conſequences of irremediable alienation and irreverſible proſcription, was converted by their Mahommedan rulers into a lucrative ſource of oppreſſion. Superſtition com-

* See Scrofton's Hindooſtan.

bined with avarice to invent the means of inflicting this dreadful chaſtiſement, and fines, without mercy, were exacted by thoſe bigotted and venal judges.

By the ſame mercileſs conquerors, their commerce was impeded by every clog which avaricious and unfeeling power could invent to obſtruct it. Neither the mild and tolerating ſpirit of the religion of the Hindoos, nor the gentle and inoffenſive manners of its votaries, were ſufficient to protect them from the intolerant zeal and brutal antipathy of their Mahommedan invaders. In the effuſions of their barbarous enthuſiaſm, the temples of the Hindoos ornamented with the moſt curious ſculpture, and decorated with all the ingenuity and ſkill for which they were cele-

brated, were utterly demoliſhed, and the monuments of their ancient ſplendour every where deſtroyed.

For the ſupport of the Mogul Nobles, aſſignments were granted on the lands of the different provinces, which were levied by theſe military lords in perſon, who, haughty and voluptuous, came to collect their pay from a timid people, whom they hated and deſpiſed with all the fervour of bigotry and ignorance.

To enumerate the multifarious load of oppreſſion under which the unhappy Hindoos were doomed to groan, would be a tedious and ungrateful taſk. A generous mind cannot take pleaſure in contemplating the picture of human miſery, and hu-

man crime, though drawn by the correct hand of truth: let it then ſuffice to ſay, that the whole ſyſtem of Mogul government toward their conquered Provinces was ſuch, as could never fail to ſhock an European mind.

Hard, however, as was the fate of the poor Hindoos under their Mogul Sovereigns, even in the moſt flouriſhing ſtate of their Empire; when that Empire mouldered to decay, and the power of one deſpot was overthrown, to make way for the uncontrouled licentiouſneſs of numberleſs petty tyrants, it became yet more truly deplorable *.

The vigorous adminiſtration of a long line of able Princes, had, alone, for ages

* See Rohilla Hiſtory.

preſerved this vaſt, but heterogeneous, and ill-conſtructed fabric from diſſolution; and when, according to the unavoidable conſequences of hereditary deſpotiſm, the reins of government were tranſmitted into weak and feeble hands, it fell rapidly to ruin. To the wretched ſucceſſor of the Imperial throne, the miſerable repreſentative of the houſe of Timur, little now remains, but an univerſally acknowledged title to royalty, declared by inefficacious expreſſions of loyalty and attachment; while thoſe who by bold uſurpation, ſucceſsful rebellion, or inſidious fraud, poſſeſſed themſelves of the ſpoils of the ruined empire, have eſtabliſhed in their own families the right of ſucceſſion to the territories thus acquired.

In thoſe provinces which, by a train of circumſtances, totally foreign to our purpoſe to relate, have fallen under the dominion of Great Britain, it is to be hoped the long-ſuffering Hindoos have experienced a happy change. Nor can we doubt of this, when we conſider, that in thoſe provinces, the horrid modes of puniſhment, inflicted by the Mahommedans, have been aboliſhed; the fetters, which reſtrained their commerce, have been taken off; the taxes are no longer collected by the arbitrary authority of a military chieftain, but are put upon a footing that at once ſecures the revenue, and protects the ſubject from oppreſſion. The Banditti of the Hills, which uſed to moleſt the inoffenſive inhabitants by their predatory incurſions, have been brought into peace-

able ſubjection. That unrelenting perſecution, which was deemed a duty by the ignorant bigotry of their Muſſulman rulers, has, by the milder ſpirit of Chriſtianity, been converted into the tendereſt indulgence. Their ancient laws have been reſtored to them; a tranſlation of them, into the Perſian and Engliſh languages, has been made, and is now the guide of the Courts of Juſtice, which have been eſtabliſhed among them. Agriculture has been encouraged by the moſt certain of all methods—the ſecurity of property; and all theſe advantages have been rendered doubly valuable, by the enjoyment of a bleſſing equal, if not ſuperior, to every other —the Bleſſing of Peace, a bleſſing to which they had for ages been ſtrangers *.

* Review of the Britiſh Government in India.

Theſe ſalutary regulations, originating with Mr. Haſtings, ſteadily purſued by Sir John M'Pherſon and Lord Cornwallis, and perſevered in by the preſent Governor General, will diffuſe the ſmiles of proſperity and happineſs over the beſt provinces of Hindooſtan, long after the diſcordant voice of Party ſhall have been humbled in the ſilence of eternal reſt; and the rancorous miſrepreſentations of envy and malevolence, as much forgotten, as the florid harangues, and turgid declamations, which conveyed them to the ſhort-lived notice of the world.

The change which has been effected on the character, and manners of the Hindoos, during ſo many years of ſubjection,

and ſo many convulſions in their political ſtate, is not by any means ſo great, as ſuch powerful cauſes might have been ſuppoſed to have produced.

In wandering through the deſolated iſlands of the Archipelago, or even on the claſſic ſhores of Italy, the enlightened traveller would in vain hope to recogniſe, in the preſent inhabitants, one remaining lineament of the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of their illuſtrious anceſtors. *There* the mouldering edifice, the fallen pillar, and the broken arch, bear, alone, their ſilent teſtimony, to the genius and refinement of the ſtates which produced them. But in Hindooſtan, the original features that marked the character of their nation, from time immemorial, are ſtill too viſible to be

miſtaken or overlooked. Though they have, no doubt, loſt much of their original purity, and ſimplicity of manners, thoſe religious prejudices which kept them in a ſtate of perpetual ſeparation from their conquerors, has tended to the preſervation of their originality of character, and all its correſpondent virtues.

In the few diſtricts which, ſecured by their inſignificancy, or the inacceſſibility of their ſituation, retained their independence; the original character ſtill remains apparent. Such, till about the middle of the preſent century, was the fate of thoſe, whoſe territories were ſituate along the mountains of Kummaoom.

The inhabitants of this lofty boundary of the rich and fertile province of Kutta-

her, continued to enjoy the bleſſings of independence and ſecurity, till that province was brought under the ſubjection of a bold and ſucceſsful Rohilla adventurer, who eſtabliſhing himſelf, and his followers, in the poſſeſſion of Kuttaher (which from thence-forth bore the name of Rohilcund) directed his arms toward the extirpation of thoſe Rajahs, whoſe vicinity excited his jealouſy and alarmed his pride.

He ſucceeded but too well in the execution of his unjuſt deſign, and did not fail to make the moſt tyrannical uſe of the victory he had obtained. Some of theſe Chiefs he baniſhed for ever from the long enjoyed ſeats of their anceſtors; ſome he removed to the other ſide of the Ganges, and from the few he ſuffered to

remain, he ſtipulated the payment of an annual tribute *, and the immediate depoſit of an exorbitant fine.

The Rajah Zaarmilla, who will ſoon be introduced to the acquaintance of the reader, appears to have been deſcended from one of thoſe petty Sovereigns, who were obliged to put on the galling yoke of their unfeeling conqueror. He, however, muſt be ſuppoſed to have been among the number who were permitted to remain on their ancient territories, while the family of his friend and correſpondent Maandara, appears to have been baniſhed from the Province, and to have taken ſhelter in the neighbourhood of Agra.

* See Rohilla Hiſtory.

This ſhort ſketch, imperfect as it is, may ſerve to give ſome idea of the ſtate of Hindooſtan, not only when the Letters of the Rajah, which are now to be laid before the public, were written, but antecedent to that period. Adequate, however, to the purpoſe of elucidation, as it may be thought by ſome readers, it may be cenſured by others, as a preſumptuous effort to wander out of that narrow and contracted path, which they have allotted to the female mind.

To obviate this objection, the writer hopes it will be ſufficient to give a ſuccinct account of the motives which led her to the examination of a ſubject, at one time very univerſally talked of, but not of-

ten very thoroughly underſtood. From her earlieſt inſtructors, ſhe imbibed the idea, that toward a ſtrict performance of the ſeveral duties of life, Ignorance was neither a neceſſary, nor an uſeful auxiliary, but on the contrary, that ſhe ought to view every new idea as an acquiſition, and to ſeize, with avidity, every proper opportunity for making the acquirement.

In the retirement of a country life, it was from books alone that any degree of information was to be obtained; but when theſe ſequeſtered ſcenes were exchanged for the metropolis, opportunities for inſtruction, of a nature ſtill more pleaſing, were preſented.

The affairs connected with the ſtate of our dominions in India, were then the ge-

neral topic of converſation. It was agreeable, from its novelty; and ſhe had the peculiar advantage of hearing it diſcuſſed by thoſe, who, from local knowledge, accurate information, and unbiaſſed judgment, were eminently qualified to render the diſcuſſion both intereſting and inſtructive. The names of the moſt celebrated Orientaliſts became familiar to her ear; a taſte for the productions of their writers was acquired; and, had it not been for a fatal event, which transformed the cheerful haunt of domeſtic happineſs into the gloomy abode of ſorrow, and changed the energy of Hope into the liſtleſſneſs of deſpondency, a competent knowledge of the language of the originals would likewiſe have been acquired. Time, at length, poured its balm into the wounds of afflic-

tion, and the mind, by degrees, took pleaſure in reverting to ſubjects which were interwoven with the ideas of paſt felicity. The letters of the Rajah were ſought for, and the employment they afforded was found ſo ſalutary, in beguiling the hours of ſolitude, and ſoothing the pain of thought, that the ſtudy of them was reſumed, as an uſeful relaxation, and, being brought to a concluſion, they are now preſented to the world, whoſe deciſion upon their merit, is looked forward to with timid hope, and determined reſignation.

IT has been juſtly complained, that the different orthography adopted by the Oriental tranſlators is a ſource of much perplexity to the Engliſh reader; but, from the variety of opinions that prevail upon the ſubject, it is an evil which cannot eaſily be remedied. Inſtead of the double vowels *ee*, and *oo*, uſed by Mr. Wilkins, and frequently by Mr. Halhed, Sir William Jones ſubſtitutes *i*, and *u*; and inſtead of the *K*, made uſe of by the former Gentleman, he uſes the letter *C*. From the different modes of pronunciation among the natives in the different provinces, another difficulty has ariſen. It is from that cauſe that we frequently find the letter *B* a ſubſtitute for *V*, as Beena for Veena, &c.

IN the following Gloſſary, moſt of the Oriental words that occur in the Letters of the Rajah will be found.

GLOSSARY.

ARJOON, or ARUN. The dawn. *See* SURRAYA.

AVATORS. Deſcents of the Deity in his character of Preſerver. Ten of theſe appearances of the Divinity are mentioned by the Hindoos, nine of which have already taken place; the tenth Avator

we are told is yet to come, and is expected to appear mounted (like the crowned conqueror in the Apocalypſe) on a white horſe, with a cimetar, blazing like a comet, to cut down all incorrigible offenders. —*Aſiatic Reſearches.*

BRAHMA. The creating Power.

BIBBY. Lady.

CARTICEYA. The God of War.

DEWTAH. The Divinity to whom worſhip is offered.

DEVAS, or DAIVERS. The Hindoos ſuppoſe the Univerſe to be divided into fourteen regions, or ſpheres, of which ſix are below, and ſeven are above this of the Earth, next beyond the vault of the viſible heavens is the firſt Paradiſe. The proper inhabitants of this region are called Devas or Daivers, they may be conſidered as Demi Gods, of whom Endra, or Indra, is the chief.

FAKEER, or FAQUIR. An order of religious recluſes.

GANESA. In many parts of Hindooſtan every temple has the image of Ganeſa (the God of Wiſdom) placed over its gate; and the door of every dwelling-houſe is ſuperſcribed with his name.

HIRCARRAH. A meſſenger. A ſpy.

KRISHNA. One of the Avators. His adventures are celebrated in the epic poem called the Mahabba-

ret. He is conſidered by Sir William Jones as the Apollo of the Hindoos.

KHANSAMAN. Land, or houſe ſteward.

LACKSHMI, or LACSHMI. The conſort of Veeſhnu. She, like the other Hindoo Goddeſſes, is diſtinguiſhed by a variety of names; as Lackſhmi, ſhe is the Goddeſs of Fortune: as Sree, the Goddeſs of Plenty, or Hindoo Ceres.

MAYA. Explained by ſome Hindoo ſcholars to be "*the firſt inclination of the Godhead to diverſify* "*himſelf by creating worlds.*" 'But the word Mayá, 'or Deluſion, has a more ſubtle and recondite ſenſe 'in the Védánta Philoſophy, where it ſignifies the 'ſyſtem of *perceptions.*—*See Aſiatic Reſearches.*

MAHABBARET. An epic poem in the Shanſcrit language, of great antiquity. The Bhagvat Geeta, an epiſode from this poem, has been tranſlated into Engliſh by Mr. Wilkins.

PUNDIT, or PUNDEET. A learned Bramin.

POOJAH. The performance of worſhip to the Gods.

RYOTS. Hindoo labourers, or peaſants.

RAMOZIN. The Muſſulman Lent, or great faſt, obſerved for the period of 30 days.

RIGYAJUHSAMAT'HARVA. A compound word denoting the four immortal Vedas, namely, the Rig-veda, the Yajur-veda, the Sama-veda, and the Atharva-veda.

SERRESWATTEE, or SERESWATI. The Patroneſs of Science and Genius.

SHASTER. Literally a book. The Scripture of the Hindoos is, for pre-eminence called *the Shaſter*.

SANC'HA. An ancient Hindoo Poet.

SURRAYA, or SURYA. The God of Light, or Orb of the Sun perſonified. The Sect who pay particular adoration to this Divinity are called Sauras. He has a multitude of names, and among them twelve epithets or titles which denote his diſtinct powers in each of the twelve months. The Indian Poets, and Painters, deſcribe his car as drawn by ſeven green horſes, preceded by Arun, or Arjoon, the dawn, who is denominated his charioteer.

SANASSEE. A Hindoo devotee.

SAIB. Gentleman. Perſons of eſtimation.

VAIDYA. The tribe who practice phyſic. Phyſicians.

VARUNA. The Genius of the ſea, and wind.

VEDAS, or BEIDS. The ſacred books of the Hindoos.

VEESHNU. The preſerving Power.

VEENA, or BEENA, or BEEN. A muſical inſtrument, of the Guittar kind.

ZIMEENDAR. A Landholder.

LETTERS

OF A

HINDOO RAJAH.

LETTER I.

Zāārmilla, *Rajah of Almora, to* Kiſheen Neêay Māāndāāra, *Zimeendar of Cumlore, in Rohilcund.*

PRAISE to Ganeſa! May the benign influence of the God of Wiſdom *, beaming on the breaſt of Māāndāāra, diſpel thoſe clouds of wrath which have been engen-

* The God of Wiſdom, a cuſtomary introduction to the writings of the Hindoos. From ſeveral ex-

dered by miſtake, and poured forth in the whirlwind of impetuoſity.

I might juſtly expoſtulate upon the harſhneſs of thy expreſſions; but I call to mind the goodneſs of thy heart, and they are effaced from my memory. We ſhrink from the fury of the King of Rivers, when his terror-ſtriking voice threatens deſtruction to the ſurrounding world; but when his ſilver waves return to the peaceful channel allotted to them by the adored Veeſhnû, we forget our terrors, and contemplate with rapture the majeſtic grandeur of the ſacred ſtream who rolls his bleſſings to a thouſand nations. And who would not prefer the caſual fury of the

preſſions made uſe of by the Rajah in the courſe of his correſpondence, he appears to have been an adherent of the ſect called in the northern parts of India Veeſhnûbukt, or Adorers of Veeſhnû, the preſerving Power.

mighty Ganges to the apathetic dulneſs of the never moving pool?

The Angel of Truth, whoſe dwelling is with Brahma, be my witneſs, that I have never been unmindful of the vows of friendſhip we ſo ſolemnly exchanged over the ſtill warm aſhes of the venerable Pundit; who was the guide and the inſtructor of our tender years. Twice, in performance of that vow, have I eſſayed to ſend the promiſed information, and twice have my intentions been fruſtrated.

No ſooner had the auſpicious arms of the ſons of mercy opened the long-obſtructed channels of conveyance, and checked the fury of the Afgan Khans, who have ſo long oppreſſed our unhappy country*,

* 'On the 22d day of April, 1774, was fought between the armies of the viſier, aſſiſted by the Engliſh, and the troops of Hafiz Rhamut, the Rohilla Chief, the deciſive battle of Cutterah; in which the

than I diſpatched a meſſenger to thee, with a full account of public affairs, and of all the incidents that have occurred to me in my retirement. Two months ago I learned that this meſſenger was drowned in his attempts to paſs the Jumna. Again I wrote the ſame voluminous detail, and ſent it by the hands of a Hircarrah, employed in the Engliſh camp, and who was ſent by Mens, with diſpatches to Agra, his native city. This meſſenger, more unfortunate than the other, was ſeized and cut in pieces, by a band of brutal Afgans. Hoping that this account will fully exculpate me from the charge of neglect, and

complete victory obtained by the former at once annihilated the power and decided the fate of the Afgan adventurers. Wherever the fate of the Rohillas became known (ſays the hiſtorian of their ſhort lived empire) the Hindoo Zimeendars (each of whom is poſſeſſed of a ſtrong hold attaching to the chief village of his diſtrict) ſhut their forts, and refuſing to their late maſters protection, plundered without diſtinction all whom they found flying toward the hills.'

leaving it to the ſhrill voice of fame to acquaint thee with the public tranſactions of this eventful period, I ſhall recapitulate ſuch parts of my two epiſtles as regarded myſelf alone, and in conformity to the promiſes that have paſſed between us, ſhall lay open to you not only the actions of my life, but the very thoughts of my heart.

Three days after that in which the blood of the Khans had ſtained the plains of Cutterah *, word was brought me by the Zimeendar of Lolldong, that our late oppreſſors were flying on the wings of deſpair to the mountains of Cummow. He conjured me, by all that we had ſuffered from the cruelty of Allee Mohamed, and the tyranny of his ſucceſſors, not to give paſſage to the fugitives; but by arming my Ryots to diſappoint their hopes of ſafety,

* Hiſtory of the Rohilla Afgans, page 241.

and turn them back upon the ſwords of their enemies. I returned for anſwer, that 'I gave praiſe to Veeſhnû, who had avenged the wrongs of the Hindoos, but that I had never learned to lift my hand againſt a fallen foe.' I then iſſued ſtrict orders to all my Ryots to keep within their dwellings, and having performed the accuſtomary Poojah *, betook myſelf to reſt. Reflections upon the viciſſitudes of fortune, agitated my ſoul. Sleep forſook my eyelids; and, while the earth was yet clothed in the robes of darkneſs, I went forth with a few attendants, in hopes that the temperate air, and placid ſtillneſs of the night, would tranquiliſe my mind. With aſtoniſhment I perceived the eaſtern horizon already tinged by the flame coloured charioteer of Surrayâ †. I haſtened

* Worſhip.

† Arjoun, or the dawn; who is expreſſively repreſented in Hindoo ſculpture by the upper part only of a man, the reſt of his perſon being ſuppoſed not yet emerged from darkneſs.

to aſcend the hill, that I might be ready to pay my devotions at the firſt appearance of the glorious orb, the ſacred emblem of the life-giving ſpirit of the Eternal! I reached the ſummit of the hill, but, Powers of Mercy! what a ſight then preſented itſelf to my view? The vaſt jungle extending over the northern ſide of Cumlore was in a blaze of fire. The reflection of the mighty conflagration illuminated the heavens, while ſounds more dreadful than had ever pierced my ears, undulated through the fire-fraught air. The ſhrieks of the affrighted Afgans, the ſhouts of the Hindoos, who had contrived this method to obſtruct their flight, the growling of the tigers, and yelling of the other beaſts of prey, who had been diſturbed in their dens, the crackling of the flames, and the bright glare of the ſtill-ſpreading fire, formed altogether an unſpeakable combination of horrors.

Many of the wretched fugitives paſſed the place where I ſtood; no longer the proud and haughty lords, at whoſe frown the Rajahs of the earth were wont to tremble: terror now ſat upon their humbled foreheads, and deſpair ſeemed the leader of their ſteps. While I contemplated their preſent calamity, the remembrance of their former tyranny paſſed into the boſom of oblivion. A young man appeared, the blood ſtill ſtreaming from his wounds, while on his back he bore his aged father. In vain did the old man entreat this dutiful ſon to leave him to his fate; he ſtill proceeded, with tottering ſteps to convey him he knew not whither. 'Surely,' ſaid I, 'the actions of this old man muſt have been meritorious in the ſight of Heaven, that he ſhould have been rewarded with ſuch a ſon.' I looked on the old warrior, and called to mind the grey hairs of my father.

I ſtopped the fugitives, who ſeeing my dreſs, looked on me without hope, and prepared themſelves to receive the ſtroke of death. Whatever are your offences, ſaid I to the ſon, your filial piety has in my eyes made atonement: turn, therefore, to the ſhelter of my fortreſs, where you may remain in ſafety till times of peace. They expreſſed their thankfulneſs, and with them I returned to my houſe. At the foot of the hill I heard a groan, which I perceived to proceed from under the branches of a tree that had lately fallen. I ordered my ſervants to ſearch for the perſon who uttered it, and to my aſtoniſhment ſaw one in the dreſs of an Engliſh officer; he appeared to ſuffer the anguiſh of exceſſive pain, and though borne by the ſervants with all poſſible care, before we could reach the houſe, the inviſible ſpirit ſeemed about to forſake the noble dwelling that

had been allotted to it. On examination we found that his leg and many of his ribs were fractured. While I was in deſpair about this apparently irremediable misfortune, the old Afgan addreſſed himſelf to me, and profeſſing his ſkill in the art of ſurgery, told me that he thought he could effect a cure. He accordingly applied ſuch remedies as he deemed proper, and with ſuch ſucceſs that the ſtranger ſoon obtained ſome degree of relief. He no ſooner lifted his eyes upon me, than calling to mind the Engliſh that had been taught us, by the Vaidya Beaſs, I held out to him the hand of friendſhip, ſaying, 'how do?' His eyes gliſtened with pleaſure, and from that moment our hearts were united by the ſeal of friendſhip. When the tyrant pain had a little looſened the fetters of her power, he ſpoke to me in the Perſian language; of which, as well as the Arabic, and the different dialects of Hindoſtan, he was *perfect maſter*. His

converſation was like the ſoft dew of the morning, when it falls upon the valley of roſes; it at once refreſhed and purified the ſoul. His knowledge, in compariſon of that of the moſt learned among the Pundits of the preſent age, was like the mountains of Cummow compared to the neſt of the ant. The powers of his mind were deep and extenſive as the wave of the mighty Ganges. His heart was the ſeat of virtue, and truth repoſed in his boſom.

He had ſet out many months before, from Calcutta, with an intention of travelling through the northern parts of Hindoſtan, in order to trace the antiquities of the moſt ancient of nations. He had proceeded into Kuttaher, when a band of Afgans, headed by Daunda Adoola, who had been lately diſmiſſed from the ſervice of Hafiz Rhamut, took him priſoner. They confined him in a ſtrong hold, on

the banks of the Gurra; and on the approach of the combined armies of the Engliſh and Sujah Dowla, they left him expoſed to the miſeries of famine; but when obliged to fly to the woods of Cummow they forced him to accompany their flight, in hopes that he might be the means of procuring them terms with the Engliſh; whoſe honour they knew to be equal to their valour.

On their rout to Cummow they were diſcovered by the Ryots of Raey Bandor, who by the orders of their maſter ſet fire to the wood in which they lay concealed; attempting, by this act of cruelty, meanly to avenge on theſe poor fugitives the death of his kindred, and the loſs of his Zimeendary. Captain Percy, for this was the name of my amiable gueſt, fled with the reſt; being overpowered by fatigue, and alarmed by the yells of the tiger, had reſolved to climb a tree for ſafety, and there

to remain until he could put himſelf under the protection of a Hindoo. The tree he attempted had been one left almoſt cut by my ſervants, but who had neglected to pull it down; it unfortunately gave way to the preſſure, and occaſioned the fatal accident I have already mentioned.

Thou knoweſt, O Māāndāāra, how my mind has ever thirſted after knowledge. Thou knoweſt with what ardour I have ever performed my *Poojah Seraſwatee* *, and that, at an age when few young men have read the Beids of the Shaſter †, I had not only ſtudied the ſacred pages, but had peruſed every famous writing in the Shanſcrit language.

The acquiſition of the Perſic tongue opened to me a door of knowledge which

* Worſhip to Seraſwatee, the Goddeſs of Letters.

† Scripture of the Hindoos.

I was not ſlow to enter. Hiſtory, for ſome time, became my favourite ſtudy. But what did the hiſtory of ſtates and empires preſent to my view? Alas! what, but the weakneſs and the guilt of mankind? I beheld the few, whom fortune had unhappily placed in view of the giddy eminences of life, putting the reins of ambition into the bloody hand of cruelty, laſh through torrents of perfidy and ſlaughter, till, perhaps, overthrown in their career, they were trampled on by others who were running the ſame guilty race: or if they ſurvived to reach the goal they aimed at, living but to breathe the air of diſappointment, and then drop into the ſea of oblivion. Such is the hiſtory of the few whoſe guilty paſſions, and atrocious deeds have raiſed them to *renown*, and to whom the ſtupid multitude, the willing inſtruments of their ambition, the prey of their avarice, and the ſport of their pride, have given the appellation of *heroes*.

To the great body of the people I never could perceive that it made any difference who it was that held the ſcorpion whip of oppreſſion, as into whatever hand it was by them conveyed, they were equally certain of feeling the ſeverity of its ſting. Meditating on theſe things, the deep ſigh of deſpondency has burſt from my heart. Can it be, ſaid I to myſelf, that the omnipotent and eternal Ruler of the univerſe ſhould create ſuch multitudes for no other purpoſe but to ſwell the triumphs of a fellow mortal, whoſe glory riſes in proportion to the miſery he inflicts upon the human race? Surely, by what I learn from the actions of the princes of the earth, virtue is a ſhadow, and the love of it, which I have heretofore cheriſhed in my breaſt, is nothing but the illuſive phantom of a dream!

By converſing with my Engliſh gueſt I got a different view of human nature:

Through the medium of the Perſic literature it appeared univerſally darkened by depravity. In the hiſtory of Europe it aſſumed a milder form. In Europe man has not always, as in Aſia, been degraded by ſlavery, or corrupted by the poſſeſſion of deſpotic power. Whole nations have *there* acknowledged the rights of human nature, and while they did ſo have attained to the ſummit of true glory. The Romans, whom the Perſian * writers repreſent as the lawleſs invaders, and fearleſs conquerors of the world; and the Greeks, whom they load with every opprobrium, were in fact nations of heroes. Spurning the chain of ſlavery, they wiſely thought that human nature was too imperfect to be entruſted with unlimited authority; while they performed Poojah to the Goddeſs of Liberty, their hearts were enlarged by the poſſeſſion of every virtue. She taught

* See Richardſon's Introduction to the Perſian Dictionary.

them the art of victory; ſtrengthened their nerves in the day of battle; and, when they returned from the field of conqueſt, ſhe gave ſweetneſs to the banquets of ſimplicity, and rendered poverty honourable by her ſmiles. At length, Wealth and Luxury, the enemies of the Goddeſs, entered their dominions, and enticed the people from the worſhip of Liberty; who, offended by their infidelity, entirely forſook their country, making Happineſs and Virtue the companions of her flight. On a re-examination of the conduct of theſe illuſtrious heroes, who, while their nation performed Poojah to Liberty, had gained the ſummit of fame; Percy pointed out to my view many imperfections, which while my breaſt was enflamed by the firſt ardour of admiration, had eſcaped my notice. The love of Liberty itſelf, that glorious plant as he called it, which if properly cultivated never fails to produce the fruits of virtue, ſprung not (he ſaid) in

the Grecian, or the Roman breaſt, from the pure ſoil of univerſal benevolence, but from the rank roots of pride and ſelfiſhneſs. It never therefore extended to embrace the human race. This perfection of virtue was unknown in the world, till taught by the religion of Chriſt. This laſt aſſertion of Percy's, appeared to me as a prejudice unfounded in truth. But ſuch are ever the haſty concluſions of ignorance. I had been taught to believe that the pure doctrine of benevolence, and mercy, was unknown to all but the favoured race of Brahma, that the Chriſtian faith like that of the Muſſulmans, was a narrow ſyſtem of ſuperſtitious adherence to the wildeſt prejudices, engendering hatred, and encouraging mercileſs perſecution againſt all who differed from them. Nothing can be more erroneous than this idea of Chriſtianity. By the indulgence of my Engliſh friend I was favoured with the peruſal of

the Chriſtian Shaſter *. The precepts it contains, are ſimple, pure, and powerful, all addreſſed to the heart; and calculated for reſtoring the univerſal peace and happineſs which has been baniſhed from the earth, ſince the days of the Sottee Jogue †.

The love of liberty in a people who are taught by the fundamental precepts of their Shaſter, 'to do to others as they would have others do to them,' riſes above

* Scriptures.

† The age of purity. The Hindoos reckon the duration of the world by four Jogues, or diſtinct ages. The Sottee Jogue, or age of purity, is ſaid to have laſted 3,200,000 years, when the life of man is ſaid to have extended to 100,000 years. The Tirtah Jogue, or age in which one third of mankind were reprobate, which conſiſted of 2,400,000 years. The Dwaper Jogue, in which one half of the human race became depraved, endured 1,600,000 years. And the Collee Jogue, in which all mankind are corrupted, is the preſent era. See Halhed's Gentoo Laws.

the narrow ſpirit of ſelfiſhneſs, and extendeth to embrace the human race! Benevolent people of England! it is their deſire, that all ſhould be partakers of the ſame bleſſings of liberty, which they themſelves enjoy. It was doubtleſs with this glorious view, that they ſent forth colonies to enlighten, and inſtruct, the vaſt regions of America. To diſſeminate the love of virtue and freedom, they cultivated the tranſ-Atlantic iſles: and to reſcue *our* nation from the hands of the oppreſſor, did this brave, and generous people viſit the ſhores of Hindoſtan!

You may imagine how deſirous I was to become acquainted with ſome particulars concerning the form of government, laws, and manners, of this highly favoured nation. Provided the above particulars are *true*, it is of courſe to expect, that they muſt all be formed after the model of perfection; and ſuch, according to my con-

ception of the accounts of Percy, they undoubtedly are.

It having pleaſed Brahma to create them all of one caſt, among them are no diſtinctions, but ſuch as are the reward of virtue. It is not there as in the profligate court of Delhi, where great riches, a ſupple adherence to the miniſter, and a baſe and venal approbation of the meaſures of the court can lead to titles and diſtinction. No. In England, the honours of nobility are invariably beſtowed according to intrinſic merit. The titles and privileges of theſe heroes of the firſt claſs, deſcend to their children. We may well ſuppoſe what care is beſtowed on the education of theſe young nobles, whoſe minds are moulded into wiſdom, at Univerſities inſtituted for the purpoſe. Where vice and folly are *alike* unknown: and where the faculties of a young man, might have as *great* a chance, of getting leave to ruſt in

ignorance, as to be loſt in diſſipation! From theſe ſeminaries of virtue, they are called to the Senate of the nation; where they debate with all the gravity, and the intereſt, that might be expected from their early habits of ſerious thought, and deep inveſtigation. The ſons of the King, at an early age, take their ſeats in that tribunal, from whoſe deciſion there lies no appeal. As their example is ſuppoſed to animate the young Nobility, it may well be imagined how wiſe, learned, grave, aud pious, theſe princely youths muſt be: their actions are doubtleſs the mirrors of decorum, and their lips the gates of wiſdom!

The equality of human beings in the ſight of God, being taught by their religion, it is a fundamental maxim of their policy, that no laws are binding, which do not obtain the conſent of the people. All laws are therefore iſſued by the ſanction

of their repreſentatives; every ſeparate diſtrict, town, and community, chooſing from among themſelves, the perſons moſt diſtinguiſhed for *piety*, *wiſdom*, *learning*, and *integrity*, impart to them the power of acting in the name of the whole.

About four hundred of theſe eminent men, each of whom to all the requiſites of a Hindoo magiſtrate *, unites the

* It is ordained that 'the magiſtrate ſhall keep 'in ſubjection to himſelf his *Luſt*, *Anger*, *Avarice*, '*Folly*, *Drunkenneſs*, and *Pride*: he who cannot keep 'theſe paſſions under his own ſubjection, how ſhall 'he be able to nouriſh and inſtruct the people? Nei-'ther ſhall he be ſeduced by the pleaſures of the 'chace, nor be addicted to play, nor always employed 'in dancing, ſinging, and playing on muſical inſtru-'ments. Nor ſhall he go to any place without a 'cauſe, nor diſpraiſe any perſon without knowing his 'faults, nor ſhall he envy another perſon's ſuperior 'merit, nor ſhall ſay that ſuch perſons as are men of 'capacity are men of no capacity, &c.' See Code of Gentoo Laws, page 52.

knowledge of a Chriſtian philoſopher, form what is termed the third eſtate.

Uninfluenced by the favour of party, uncontaminated by the baſe motives of avarice or ambition, they purſue with ſteady ſteps the path of equity, and have nothing ſo much at heart as the public welfare. No war can be engaged in, and no taxes impoſed, but by the conſent of theſe patriot chiefs. Judge then, my friend, how light the burden muſt be, that is laid on by theſe repreſentatives, theſe brothers of the people. Never can ſuch men as theſe be inſtrumental in ſending war, with all its attendant miſeries, into the nations of the earth: all of whom they are taught by their Shaſter to conſider as brethren. In Aſia we behold the gory monſter, ever ready to ſtalk forth with deſtructive ſtride at the voice of ruthleſs tyranny, but in Europe, Princes are the friends of peace, and the fathers of their people.

Many of our Pundits have contemplated with aſtoniſhment, the animoſities that have ariſen among the followers of the Arabian prophet, on account of the different interpretations given by their * Imaums to certain paſſages of the Koran; forgetting that the Supreme Being delighteth in variety, and that He who hath not formed, any two objects in his vaſt creation exactly ſimilar, took doubtleſs no leſs care upon the formation of the human mind, perceiveth with delight the contrarieties of opinion among men. They have carried their preſumption ſo far, that one ſect hath dared to conceive hatred, and ill will againſt another, for not viewing every dark paſſage in the writings of their Prophet, exactly in the ſame light! How different is the caſe with the Chriſtian? The great Founder of

* See Preliminary Diſcourſe of the Bramins, employed by Mr. Haſtings in the Pootee, or compilation of the ordinations of the Pundits.—Gentoo Laws.

their religion having left every man at liberty, to chooſe the form of worſhip which he finds beſt calculated to excite, and to expreſs ſentiments of devotion, they each attach themſelves to the form moſt agreeable to their own minds, allowing the ſame liberty to others, and convinced that all are equally acceptable to the Deity, who acquieſce in his laws, and obey his commandments. In the dominions of the Muſſulmans, though all ſects are permitted to live, it is one ſect alone (the orthodox *) that is inveſted with power, or entruſted with authority. But among Chriſtians what ſect exiſts, that would accept of the moſt beneficial diſtinctions, on terms ſo contrary to the ſpirit of their Goſpel? No. All ſects, equal in the eye of Heaven, muſt needs, by the wiſe and virtuous Legiſlators of this happy country, be admitted into an equal enjoyment of

* See the Hedaya or Commentary on the Muſſulman Laws.

every right, and every privilege. The Prieſts of their religion are, as their characters are fully ſet forth in their Shaſter, men who deſpiſe the adventitious advantages of rank and fortune, who regard no diſtinctions in their flock, but the diſtinctions ariſing from internal worth, and intrinſic goodneſs; not thirſting after worldly honours; not given to luxury; ſtrangers to avarice and pride. Having no bitterneſs againſt thoſe who differ from them in opinion, animoſity, ſtrife, or wrath, is never heard of among theſe holy men, who, in the language of their Shaſter, 'paſs through things temporal, only mindful of thoſe which are eternal.' Although my unwearied application to the ſtudy of the Engliſh language, enables me to read a few paſſages in that tongue, it is to the Arabic copy of thoſe books of the Shaſter, called Goſpels, to which I am indebted for the accuracy of my information.

Not preſuming to lift the veil of myſtery, with which ſome paſſages are enveloped (a preſumption, which in a ſtranger would be equally unpardonable and unbecoming) I paſs over whatever appears to be myſterious, with the moſt profound reſpect. But that Power, which taught me to ſweep from my heart the duſt of prejudice, taught me alſo to pay homage to excellence, wherever it might be found. In the precepts of the Chriſtian Shaſter, I behold the grandeur of ſublimity, and the ſimplicy of truth. There is one particular ſo novel; ſo peculiar; ſo repugnant to the univerſally received opinions of mankind; that it conſiderably excited my aſtoniſhment. In the revelation beſtowed upon the Chriſtians, women are conſidered in the light of rational beings! free agents! In ſhort, as a moiety of the human ſpecies; whoſe ſouls are no leſs precious in the eye of the Omniſcient than that of the proud

lords of the creation! What can be more extraordinary?

The inferiority of women appears ſo eſtabliſhed by the laws of nature, and has been ſo invariably inculcated, by all the legiſlators ſent by Brahma to enlighten the eight corners of the world, that it ſeems altogether inconteſtible. It is true, that our divine laws (incomparable in wiſdom!) do not, like the laws of the Muſſulmans, abſolutely exclude women from the participation of happineſs in a future ſtate, it being written in the Shaſter, '*that a woman, who burns herſelf with her huſband, ſhall live with him in Paradiſe three crore and fifty lacks of years.*' But even in this caſe, it is conteſted by the Pundits, that her admiſſion into Paradiſe, depends on her huſband's title to an entrance into that ſtate of felicity. Uncertain tenor! precarious dependance! on which a poor woman commits herſelf to the flames! Wiſely did our

lawgivers ordain, that ignorance and ſubmiſſion ſhould be the ornaments of women; ſeeing how much the privilege of enquiry, might have diſquieted their repoſe!

Chriſtian women are more fortunate; they may enjoy Heaven without the company of their huſbands! Throughout the Chriſtian Shaſter, they are exalted to perfect equality with man. They are conſidered as occupying a ſtation of equal dignity, in the intelligent creation; and as being equally accountable, for the uſe they make of the gift of reaſon, and the monitions of conſcience. What care! what pains! muſt we then conclude to be beſtowed by Chriſtians, on the formation of the female mind? 'As the beams of the moon kindles the flowers of the Oſhadi, ſo,' ſays the philoſopher, 'doth education expand the bloſſoms of intelligence.' Where women are deſtined to be under

no controul but that of reaſon, under no reſtraint, ſave the abiding conſciouſneſs of the ſearching eye of Omnipotence, of what vaſt importance muſt their education appear, in the eyes of the enlightened! Accordingly we find that ſeminaries of female inſtruction, called Boarding-ſchools, are in England univerſally eſtabliſhed; where, by what I can learn, the improvement of the underſtanding is as ſucceſsfully attended to, and every ſolid, and uſeful accompliſhment as fully attained, as are the ſevere morals of Chriſtianity, by their brothers at the univerſity. When the females of England have completed their education in theſe ſeats of ſcienee, theſe nurſeries of wiſdom, they come forth like the mother of Kriſhna, the torch of reaſon enlightening their minds, and the ſtaff of knowledge ſupporting their virtue! In that enlightened country, a wife is the friend of her huſband. Motives of eſteem influence the choice of both; for there women are

at liberty to chooſe, or to reject offers of marriage, and educated as they are, we may well ſuppoſe how wiſely they will always chooſe! By their religion, men are prohibited from having more than one wife at a time, which at firſt view will doubtleſs appear a hardſhip in your eyes: but if you conſider what an endleſs ſource of diſquiet, the quarrels, jealouſies, and ſtrifes, among our wives frequently produce, you will perhaps acknowledge, that to leſſen the number is not ſo great a misfortune.

What I have ſaid concerning the cultivation of the female underſtanding, will perhaps, appear ridiculous in your eyes; but take the following proof of the veracity of my aſſertion. One day that I had been ſtudying the Shaſter of my Engliſh gueſt, I perceived, written in fair and legible characters, upon the firſt leaf, theſe words; 'The parting gift of Charlotte Percy to the moſt beloved of brothers.' I

carried the book to my friend, who was ſtill confined to his couch, and aſked him if Charlotte was the name of his brother? He anſwered with a ſmile, that Charlotte was the name of his dear, and amiable ſiſter. 'Your ſiſter!' repeated I, with aſtoniſhment, 'Can it be, that in your country a woman is permitted to touch the Shaſter? or, are women taught to write? It cannot be. Such things are not proper for women.' He replied, that my ſurpriſe was occaſioned, by having always been accuſtomed, to behold the ſex in the degraded ſtate of ſubjection. A ſtate, which, wherever it prevails, ſubdues the vigour, and deſtroys the virtue of the human mind. Man, he obſerved, received from nature no paſſion ſo powerful as the love of tyranny. This, the ſuperiority of bodily ſtrength, had enabled him to exerciſe over the weaker part of his ſpecies, with uncontrouled ſway. In proportion as ſociety advanced in civilization, the ad-

vantages of reaſon over bodily ſtrength prevailed, and the paſſions received from the fetters of reſtraint a degree of poliſh, which if it did not change their nature, rendered them leſs diſguſtingly ferocious. The wife of a Hindoo, continued he, is from this cauſe treated with more reſpect, and enjoys a much greater degree of liberty and happineſs, than the wife of an untutored Afgan. But it is not in the nature of man, to relinquiſh claims ſo flattering to his pride; and the innate love of the exerciſe of deſpotic authority, muſt have for ever kept the female ſex in a ſtate of ſubjection, had not the powerful mandate of religion ſnapped their chains. This, the religion received by the Chriſtians has fully accompliſhed: and to ſhew you how much it is in the power of education to improve the female mind, continued my friend, I ſhall tranſlate, for your peruſal, ſome of the letters of that ſiſter, whoſe name is written in the leaf of the book you are now

reading. According to this promiſe, my excellent friend tranſlated for me, ſeveral pieces both in proſe and verſe; preſenting me at the ſame time with copies of the originals, that I might compare them together. By that which I have encloſed for your ſatisfaction, you will perceive, that the ſiſter of Percy has not only learned to read, and write, but is in a conſiderable degree capable of thinking. Nurſed in ſolitude, ſhe in early youth took delight, to ſtring the pearls of poetry. I ſend you one of the firſt of theſe gems of fancy; which, though it boaſts not the radiant brilliancy of the Diamond, is pleaſing as the varying Opal, and ſoft as the luſtre of the green emerald. It was written after having refuſed an invitation to a party of pleaſure, on account of her duty to an aged uncle, who had adopted her as his daughter, and of whom ſhe ſpeaks, with the language of filial affection. Let it be read with candour, for it is the offſpring of

youth; with indulgence, for it is the tribute of gratitude!

BLEST be theſe rural glens, theſe flowery glades;
The lov'd retreats of innocence and joy:
Content's ſweet voice is heard beneath theſe ſhades;
Her quiet ſeat no wild wiſh dares annoy.

Dear to my heart is this ſequeſter'd ſcene;
By liberal nature deck'd in robes ſo gay:
O'er all my ſoul ſhe breathes her ſweets ſerene,
As in her walks I take delight to ſtray.

'Twas her ſweet hand that ſtrew'd this bank with flowers;
She bends theſe oſiers o'er the chryſtal ſtream;
She twines the woodbine round theſe leafy bowers:
And turns that roſe-bud to the morning's beam.

From her, ſweet Goddeſs, here in youth, I drew
Spirits as light as airy fancy's wing:

'Twas here I mark'd each glowing tint ſhe threw
On the fair boſom of the opening ſpring.

And ſhall I leave her? leave her lov'd retreat?
For ſcenes where Art her mimic power diſplays,
For the falſe pleaſures of the gay and great;
Pride's empty boaſt, and Splendor's midnight blaze.

Can Pride, can Splendor's moſt triumphant hour,
Give any pleaſure to the breaſt ſo dear,
So exquiſite, as is the conſcious power
A venerable parent's days to cheer?

Ah! then, from thee, my guardian, and my friend,
Let never vagrant wiſh preſume to ſtray;
But on my ſteps let filial love attend,
Gently to ſooth thy life's declining day.

Can I forget what to thy love I ow'd?
Forget thy goodneſs to my orphan ſtate?
Forget the boons thy tenderneſs beſtow'd?
Or thy unchang'd affection's early date?

When my lov'd father preſs'd his early bier,
(From which, alas! nor youth, nor love could ſave)
And when my widow'd mother (doom ſevere!)
Victim of ſorrow! ſunk into the grave.

Thy care a more than father's care ſupplied,
Thy breaſt a more than father's fondneſs knew.
Led by thy hand, or cheriſh'd at thy ſide,
My infant years in ſprightly pleaſures flew.

No frown from thee repreſs'd the harmleſs joy,
No harſh reproof repell'd the lively thought.
Pleas'd, thou couldſt ſmile on childhood's ſimpleſt toy,
And ſay, 'no pleaſures were ſo cheaply bought.'

Can I forget the partner of thy cares?
Whoſe kind attention form'd my early youth;
Or with what care ſhe watch'd my tender years;
And in life's morning, ſow'd the ſeeds of truth?

'Twas her inſtructions, pious, prudent, wiſe,
Taught me the virtues that adorn our ſex;

Its humbleſt duties bade me not deſpiſe;
But riſe ſuperior to its weak defects;

Taught me to ſcorn mean Pride's malignant ſneer,
The tale calumnious, cautious to receive,
To Miſery's voice to turn a willing ear;
Its woes to pity, or its wants relieve;

Taught me on pure Devotion's wings to riſe
To the unſeen, ſupreme, eternal Power;
Whoſe works an equal theme of praiſe ſupplies,
In heav'n's ſtarr'd concave, or earth's humbleſt flower.

If e'er my breaſt with love of virtue glow'd,
Or ardent ſought the Muſes' hallow'd ſhrine,
To thee my dawning taſte its culture ow'd;
Each high-born ſentiment, dear ſhade, was thine.

Oh! if thy ſainted ſpirit hovers near,
With ſmiles benign my filial vows approve:
Vows like thy conduct, artleſs, and ſincere,
Pure as thy faith, and ſpotleſs as thy love.

But ſee! where comes my venerable ſire,
With cheerful air, and looks ſerenely gay:
He comes to lead me to the ſocial fire,
To warn me of the dews of parting day.

I come, my more than father! beſt of friends!
Dear, good old man; how good, how dear to me?
Beyond thy life, for me no hope extends.
My comfort, and my peace, expire with thee.

Thus far did *Zaarmilla* write to his friend Maandaara, by the ſlave who periſhed in the ſwellings of the Jumna. Captain Percy had been then five months under the ſhadow of my roof; the ſkill of the Afgan had not been ſufficient to join the fractured bone; ſo that great pain was inflicted upon him. I had often attempted to get an account of his ſituation tranſmitted to the Engliſh camp, but

without ſucceſs. The troops of the Afgans ſurrounded me, and the danger of diſcovering to them that an Engliſh officer was in their power obliged me to act with the utmoſt circumſpection. At length, in the month Aſſen (October) the treaty was concluded between the Khan of Rampore, and the great powers. I beſought and obtained leave from Fyzoola Khan to go myſelf to the camp of the Engliſh, which was yet at the foot of the mountains. Captain Percy, weakened by the langour of diſeaſe, and ſinking under the preſſure of inceſſant pain, revived at my propoſal: the big tear gliſtened in his eye, and preſſing my hand between his, God ſhall bleſs thee, my dear Zaarmilla, cried he, the God of Heaven ſhall bleſs thee for thy kindneſs to me. In contemplating the approaching diſſolution of my being, unſhaken confidence in the mercies of my God and Saviour ſupport my ſoul. Death has for me no terrors; but methinks it

would brighten the dark paſſage that leads to it, could I again behold any of my former friends, and countrymen; their accounts would ſoften to my ſiſter the tidings of an event that will pierce her ſoul. She knows not the goodneſs of Zāārmilla; and will only imagine to herſelf the figure of her dying brother, expiring among ſtrangers.

Could ſhe be aſſured, how often my ſufferings have been alleviated by the balm of ſympathy, and how much the endearing ſenſibilities of cordial friendſhip have refreſhed my ſoul, it would be a ſolace to her affliction.

He then wrote as much as ſtrength would permit, to a Britiſh officer, who was his particular friend, and encloſing it in a few lines to the commander in chief, delivered it into my hands.

I purſued my journey to the foot of the mountains, attended only by a ſmall retinue. When we reached the place of our deſtination, we had the mortification to find that it had been for ſome time abandoned by the Engliſh, who were on their march down the country. I did not heſitate to follow them; though, being unuſed to travel, I was overtaken by fatigue, and annoyed by the rains, which began at this time to ſet in with great violence.

After a tedious and diſagreeable journey, I at length reached Rhamgaut, where the Engliſh army, at the requeſt of the Viſier, had for ſome time halted. I was received by the commander with the eye of kindneſs, and recommended by him to his officers, with the voice of praiſe. The chief to whom captain Percy had written, welcomed me in the warmth of friendſhip,

and beſtowed upon my conduct unmerited eulogium.

Soon as my limbs had recovered from the wearineſs of fatigue, this Saib, and another dear, and intimate friend of the unfortunate Percy's, who was deeply ſkilled in the ſcience of medicine, purpoſed re-returning with me, in order to ſolace, and if poſſible to reſtore the amiable youth. The rains continued to deſcend; but the ſpirit of true friendſhip riſes ſuperior to every obſtacle. We carried with us the good wiſhes of an hoſt of friends, and, ſupported by hope, accompliſhed our journey in ſafety.

From the accounts I had communicated concerning the ſituation of our friend, doctor Denbeigh, the friend on whoſe knowledge in the healing art, his brother officers placed ſo much reliance, had pronounced great hopes concerning him; hopes which

inſpired the alacrity of cheerfulneſs. Alas! as the blood-ſtained tiger of the foreſt ruſhes on the timid fawn, who, unconſcious of his preſence, ſports within the reach of his ferocious graſp, ſo doth calamity dart upon the cheriſhed hope of mortals.

When we approached my dwelling, the Khanſaman, under whoſe particular care I had left my friend, came out to meet us. His eyes were heavy with the tears of grief, and his whole deportment was marked by the preſſure of recent ſorrow. I was afraid to queſtion him, leſt his anſwer ſhould bereave me of hope; but at length my tongue articulated Percy's name. Alas! my fears were juſt. The pure ſpirit had fled from its corporeal confinement, to the boundleſs expanſion of infinity. Three days had elapſed ſince the body, deſerted by its celeſtial inhabitant, had been committed to the womb of earth: I viſited the duſt which covered it, and gave

vent to the grief that oppreſſed my ſoul. The friends of Percy united their tears with mine: they were the pure offering of friendſhip flowing from hearts of ſincerity. After we had indulged the firſt impulſes of grief, the Rhanſaman preſented us with the papers which our friend had conſigned to his care. Theſe were a ſealed packet, directed to his ſiſter, a letter to his Engliſh friend, with directions concerning his effects, and an epiſtle to me, written with the pen of affection. To me he bequeathed, as a token of his love, the little ſhrill-voiced monitor, whoſe golden tongue proclaims the lapſe of time, called in Engliſh a repeating watch, his ſiſter's picture, together with all the manuſcripts of her writing, his Engliſh Shaſter, and, in ſhort, all that was about his perſon when I had the happineſs of receiving him under my roof. I have ſince peruſed with care the precious relicts of this amiable young man. In the leaves of his pocket-book were

written many valuable remarks, ſome of which had evidently been depoſited there but a ſhort time before the Angel of Death arreſted the hand which wrote them. Among his looſe papers were ſeveral pages entitled, 'Thoughts on the Prevalence of Infidelity;' in which the names of Hume, Bolingbroke, and Voltaire, frequently occur. It will oblige me if you enquire of the Immaum Yuſeph Ib'n Medi for ſome information concerning theſe men; who, I make no doubt, are of the ſect of Hanbal, againſt whoſe opinions the Muſſulman doctors ſo bitterly inveigh. What makes me certain they are not Chriſtians is, that from what Percy has ſaid concerning their opinions, it is evident that theſe unhappy men are unconſcious of the precious ſpark of immortality which glows within their boſoms. Nay, ſo much are they inflated by vanity, ſo infatuated by the ſpirit of pride, as to utter words of arrogance with the tongue of preſumption; ſaying, that men

ought *not* to believe in the ſupreme Inheritor of eternity.

Our departed friend concludes his remarks upon theſe people, in the following words:

'Ye who are ſo keen to diſſeminate the baneful principles of infidelity, did ye know what it is to watch the ſlow, but ſteady, ſteps of death; to behold his approach in the ſilence of ſolitude, where the whiſpers of vanity are unheard, and the *ſmall ſtill* voice of conſcience alone ſpeaks audibly to the ſoul, ye would not, ſurely, be ſo raſhly forward to daſh from the lips of a fellow mortal the cordial draught of hope, and to offer in its ſtead, the bitter cup of doubt, uncertainty, and deſpair!

'The principles of religion are ſo congenial to the human mind, that I am

convinced they would almoſt always remain permanent, was it not for the adventitious prejudices, with which the pure and ſimple doctrines of Chriſtianity are ſo entangled, by the zealous adherents of every ſect, and party.

'Of all my contemporaries, they have ever been the foremoſt to throw off the reſtraints of religion, who have been what is termed *moſt ſtrictly educated*; but who never had any religious ſentiments impreſſed upon their minds, diſtinct from the particular dogmas of their reſpective ſects. With theſe dogmas their ideas of the truth of Chriſtianity were inſeparably combined; and when they afterward came to mingle with the world, and found their prejudices untenable againſt the attack of argument, the force of reaſon, or the ſneer of ridicule, the whole fabric of their faith was ſhaken to the foundation. Bleſſed be the memory of the parent who inſtructed me;

whoſe care it was to impreſs upon my mind the ſtricteſt principles, with the moſt liberal opinions. In her eyes the *mode* of worſhip was nothing; the ſpirit from which it proceeded was every thing.'

'My feelings tell me that the lamp of life is nearly exhauſted. Never more ſhall I behold the face of a friend. No ſiſter's friendly hand to ſmooth my pillow, or to ſooth my ſoul with the tender accents of affection. My impatience for the pleaſure of ſeeing my friend Grey, has deprived me of the comfort I have hitherto received from the conſoling ſympathy, and unremitting kindneſs, of the amiable Hindoo.

'Remote from country, friends, and all that my heart has been accuſtomed to hold dear;—but what, in a moment like this, could friends or country do for me? what, but to 'point the parting anguiſh.' I am

not alone. No. The ever-preſent God is with me; and his comforts ſupport my ſoul. Often in the hour of health, have I repeated with rapture the lines of the poet: and now I am called to be an evidence of their truth.

" Should fate command me to the fartheſt verge
Of the green earth, to diſtant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to ſong; where firſt the ſun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his ſetting beam
Flames on th' Atlantic iſles; 'tis nought to me:
Since God is ever preſent, ever felt,
In the void waſte as in the city full;
And where His ſpirit breathes there muſt be joy.
When e'en, at laſt, the ſolemn hour ſhall come
And wing my myſtic flight to future worlds
I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers
Will riſing wonders ſing. I cannot go
Where univerſal love not ſmiles around *."

* As Zaarmilla was unable to proceed farther in the tranſlation, we have thought proper to fill up the blank with what we imagine to have been the poetical paſſage alluded to by Captain Percy.

Such, O! Maandaara, was the concluſion of the life of this European. His two friends abode with me for a few days, and departed, loaded with every mark of my friendſhip and eſteem. I was no ſooner left alone, than melancholy took poſſeſſion of my mind. The converſation of Captain Percy gave light to my ſoul; it was at an end; and darkneſs again ſurrounded me.

The Rajah of Lolldong, and his brother, the Zimeendar, heard of my affliction, and came to comfort me. Alas! they were both too full of their own concerns, to take any part in the grief which filled my heart. In the late calamities of our nation, their lands had been ravaged by the troops of the Viſier. The protecting hand of the Engliſh, had not been able to ſave their villages from the ruthleſs hand of the deſtroyer; and their Ryots were con-

ſequently unable to pay their rents. I liſtened to the ſtory of their diſtreſſes with concern, and ſaid all in my power to comfort them. A ſecond, and a third time, they repeated the particulars of their grievances; and though they both uſually ſpoke at once, ſtill I liſtened with patience. But when I found them obſtinately perſiſt in cheriſhing the feelings of ſelfiſh regret, for their own particular misfortune, while the miſeries of thouſands, who, on the ſame occaſion, had loſt their all, found no entrance into their hearts, I could no longer liſten to their complaints with the ſemblance of attention; and, perceiving that they wearied me, they departed.

In the innocent and playful vivacity of the little Zamareanda, I have found a better ſubſtitute for intellectual enjoyment, than in the tireſome ſolemnity of ſententious dulneſs. But ſtill the ſoft dew of contentment ſheds not its divine influence

on the dwelling of Zaarmilla. My mind is toſſed in the whirlwind of doubt, and bewildered in the labyrinth of conjecture: but let not Maandaara miſtake the words of his friend; let him not imagine that my veneration for the Gods of my fathers can be leſſened by the words of a ſtranger: or, that I am ſo far miſled, as to conceive that the greateſt portion of wiſdom beſtowed by Brahma upon any nation in the world's circumference, can bear any compariſon with that which has been given in the ſacred Vedas. No. I bow with reverence while I pronounce the name of the ſacred volumes; and confeſs that in Rigyajuhſámás' Harva the immortal treaſures of true knowledge are depoſited.

But in what text of the Veda, Upa Veda, Vedanga, Purana, Dherma, or Dherſana *, is it forbidden to contemplate the

* The ſix great Shaſters, on which all knowledge,

operation of Mâya throughout the ſea-girt earth? Why ſhould I remain in doubt as to the truth of the accounts given me by the young Chriſtian? Why ſhould I not ſatisfy my mind by a farther acquaintance with his countrymen, by which alone I can diſcover, whether his words have been dictated by the ſpirit of deluſion, or emanated from the heart of integrity?

If his accounts are juſt; if the book he has given me be *indeed* the Shaſter of the Chriſtians, I can, in that caſe, have no doubt of its being the guide of their practice, as well as the rule of their faith; nor help feeling an ardent deſire for knowing more of men, whoſe converſation muſt be ſo full of purity, and whoſe lives are devoted to good works!

divine and human, is ſuppoſed to be comprehended. See Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i, article 18.

What I have already learned from the worthy European, whoſe death has cauſed the arrow of affliction to rankle in my boſom, ſo far from hurting my mind, has ſerved but to invigorate my virtue. It is by the breath of Ganeſa, that the flame of curioſity has been kindled in my boſom. And wherefore ſhould I not indulge myſelf in following that path to knowledge, which the ſpirit that enlighteneth my underſtanding, impelleth me to purſue? If the ſun of ſcience, which roſe with radiant ſplendor on our eaſtern hemiſphere, now beams its fervid rays upon the regions of the weſt, why ſhould I be prevented from following its glorious courſe?

Thou wilt, perhaps, tell me of what I owe to my Caſt, my country, and my people. As to the firſt, thou knoweſt, that the acquirement of knowledge, is not a duty confined to the race, which ſprung

from the mouth of Brahma; and though it is neceſſary that every Hindoo ſhould keep himſelf free from contamination, yet many holy men have found it poſſible to do ſo, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, even while they made their abode in the dwellings of Mahommadans, and Chriſtians. No opportunity could offer more favourable than the preſent, for quitting my country, without prejudice to my own intereſt or that of my people. The peace which has been happily reſtored to us, is enſured by the faith of our deliverers: and, moreover, the wiſdom, generoſity, and clemency, which adorn the character of Fyzoola Khan *, give the beſt pledge for the ſecurity of our poſſeſſions.

I have, therefore, no obſtacle to ſurmount in the accompliſhment of my wiſhes but one. It is the diſpoſal of Zamareanda,

* See the Rohilla Hiſtory.

Could I leave her in the poſſeſſion of my friend, my mind would be at reſt. And who ſo worthy to be the wife of Maandaara as the ſiſter of Zaarmilla? She is yet in the tenderneſs of youth, but is accompliſhed in all that our laws permit women to learn. Her mind is pure as the lilly, that bends its ſilver head over the tranſparent ſtream. Modeſty is enſhrined in her cheeks, and beauty ſparkles through the deep fringe which encircles her ground-kiſſing eyes. The blood of a thouſand Rajahs flows through her veins, and her Ayammi Shadee * ſhall be worthy of the love of her brother. If this propoſal ſeemeth good in thine eyes, I will meet thee at Ferrochabad, in the middle of the month Phogoun †, and there thou ſhalt receive

* Ayammi Shadee is the preſent made to a young woman by her relations, during the period of her betrothment, and which is, ever after, conſidered as her own property. See the Gentoo Laws.

† Anſwering to part of our February and March.

the virtuous maiden from the hands of thy friend.

I expect thy answer with impatience. Farewell.

LETTER II.

The moſt faithful of Friends, Kiſheen Neêay Māāndāāra; *to the Powerful and enlightened Rajah,* Seeta Juin Zāārmilla.

PRAISE be to Veeſhnû! The long wiſhed-for letter from the friend of my youth, hath kindled the fire of conflicting paſſions in the breaſt of Maandaara. The aſſurance of thy continued kindneſs, lights the ſpark of joy; but the intelligence of the infatuation that hath ſeized thy mind, envelops my ſoul in the dark cloud of deſpair. I perceive that thou art under the influence of enchantment, and that that falſe ſtranger hath uſed ſome charm to deceive thy underſtanding. What would

the ſpirit of thy father, what would the learned Pundit, to whoſe inſtructions we are equally indebted, what would they pronounce, could they hear that Zaarmilla thought it neceſſary to ſojourn among infidels, and impious eaters of blood, in order to acquire knowledge? Can a race who ſprung from the duſt that was ſhaken from the feet of Brahma, and who are on that account beneath the meaneſt Sooder, who is honoured in being permitted to touch thy ſandals, a race who though leſs ſavage than that of the Muſſulmans with regard to thoſe that bear the human form, exceed them in cruelty to all the other animated inhabitants of the earth. Can any of this race be capable of inſtructing the deſcendant of a thouſand Rajahs? Impoſſible. From the ant thou mayeſt learn induſtry. From the dog thou mayeſt be inſtructed in faithfulneſs. The horſe may teach thee diligence, and the elephant inſtruct thee in patience, magnanimity, and

wiſdom; but expect not from Europeans to attain the knowledge of any virtue. How ſhould they be learned that are but of yeſterday? Their remoteſt annals extend but to the trifling period of a few thouſand years. While enlightened, and inſtructed in myſtery, we can trace the hiſtory of revolving ages through the amazing period of the four Jogues.

I am not, however, ſurpriſed that you ſhould be the dupe of their enchantments. I know how far the evil genii have aſſiſted man in that art: of their proficiency in it I had myſelf a very convincing proof.

When the Engliſh Saib, to whom Rurſha Bedwan was Mounſhi, abode at Agra, he took pleaſure in aſtoniſhing thoſe who went to viſit him, with a diſplay of his magical ſkill. Among ſeveral other tricks, he made the whole company, conſiſting of more than twenty perſons, lay hold of

each other's hands, and form a circle, and then by turning the handle of a little inſtrument, compoſed only of metal and glaſs, but which, I ſuppoſe, muſt have contained the evil ſpirits obedient to his command; he, all at once, cauſed ſuch a ſenſation to paſs through the arms of the company, as if a ſudden ſtroke had broken the bone, which was not, however, on examination, found to be in the leaſt injured. As all felt it preciſely at the ſame moment, it was impoſſible that he could have touched each of us, and therefore it is evident that it could be nothing but magic that could produce ſo extraordinary an effect. At another time he ſhut out the piercing light of day, which has always been unfavourable to ſuch practices, and made us behold armies of men, and elephants, and horſes, paſs before us on the wall. When they diſappeared, they were ſucceeded by a raging ſea, vomiting fire, and foaming with all the appearance of a

tremendous ſtorm. Ships rolled upon the boſom of the deep; and men who appeared wild with diſtreſs, and panting in the agony of terror, were exerting themſelves to ſave their lives, and preſerve their ſhips from the pointed rocks which environed them. This ſight of horror drew tears from our eyes; and we burſt into exclamations of ſorrow. When lo! in a moment, the ſun being admitted into the apartment, the ſcene vaniſhed, and we ſaw nothing but the hangings which formerly adorned the wall.

Would the ſon of Coaſhhind forſake the land of his fathers, and wander to regions which the glorious luminary of heaven ſcarcely deigns to irradiate with his golden beams, to learn tricks like theſe? Surely there are jugglers enough in Hindoſtan who would, for a ſmall reward, inſtruct him in the myſteries of the magic art; and as the devils they employ are of our own

country, they muſt be of a leſs pernicious nature than thoſe of ſtrangers.

So far from being guided by wiſdom, the laws by which theſe people are governed, are abominable and abſurd: which I ſhall demonſtrate to you, by the following facts, of which I was myſelf an eye witneſs, during my ſhort abode at their camp. Like you, I had ſuffered my mind to be prejudiced in favour of a people whoſe conduct had been ſo favourable to our nation. The order and regularity which prevailed among them, impreſſed me at firſt with the higheſt idea of their virtue and wiſdom. I had as yet ſeen no appearance of any religious ceremony among them, when, on the third day after my arrival, my attention was attracted by a proceſſion, which I immediately ſuppoſed to be in honour of their Dewtah. Curious to behold the nature of their ceremonies upon this occaſion, I followed the pro-

ceſſion, at which part of the camp aſſiſted. When lo! to my equal ſurpriſe and horror, I beheld one poor ſoldier ſtripped, tied up, and almoſt lacerated to death; a thouſand laſhes being inflicted upon his naked ſhoulders. That one of their prieſts ſhould have undergone all this in voluntary penance, would not have ſurpriſed me. We every day ſee inſtances of greater ſufferings than this, inflicted by our Fakeers upon their own bodies. But I could not forbear aſtoniſhment, when informed, that this cruel ceremony was performed as a puniſhment upon a ſoldier, for the trifling crime of purloining a few rupees from one of his officers. Doubtleſs, thought I, the morals of the people muſt be very pure, in whoſe eyes ſo ſmall an offence can ſeem worthy of ſo great a puniſhment.

While I yet ruminated upon the ſcene which I had witneſſed, I was called

to the tent of an officer, who had, ever ſince my arrival at the camp, treated me with great kindneſs. I had not long converſed with him (for he ſpoke very good Mhors) when ſeveral of his brother officers came to viſit him. They converſed in their own language, and appeared, from the frequent burſts of laughter which eſcaped them, to have entered upon a very pleaſant topic. I was unwilling to loſe the knowledge of a diſcourſe, which ſeemed to produce ſo much mirth; and applied to my interpreter for information. He told me the ſubject of their merriment, was the *diſhonour* of one of their own countrymen, a Chief of rank and eminence, whoſe wife had ſuffered the torch of her virtue to be extinguiſhed, by the vile breath of a ſeducer. How great, cried I, muſt be the torture awaiting the wretch who could be guilty of ſo great a crime? If the poor pilferer of a few rupees was doomed to ſuffer ſo ſeverely, what

muſt the man undergo, who could baſely contaminate the bed of his friend, rob him of his honour, and deſtroy his peace? If the weight of the puniſhment keeps pace with the gradation in atrocity, imagination can hardly paint to itſelf any thing ſo dreadful as the ſufferings to which this wretch muſt be condemned. This obſervation, repeated by my Mounſhi, redoubled the mirth of the company; and I heard, with aſtoniſhment, that the diſhonour of one of theſe *illuſtrious Europeans* was to be compenſated, not by the puniſhment of the aggreſſor, not by the ſacrifice of his life, and the degradation of his family, but by a ſum of money! Can virtue ſubſiſt among a people, who ſet a greater value upon a few pieces of ſilver, than upon their honour?

This circumſtance did not fail to deſtroy, the impreſſion I had received in favour of theſe people. But I ſhould, perhaps, have

remained ſome longer time among them, had I not beheld a deed ſo horrible, as filled my ſoul with indignation and diſguſt. Yes, my miſguided friend, I ſaw theſe heroes, whom you falſely imagine ſo pure, ſo harmleſs, ſo full of piety and benevolence, I ſaw them—my heart ſhudders, and my hand trembles while I relate it, I ſaw them devour, with looks that betokened the moſt ſavage ſatisfaction, the ſacred offspring of a ſpotted cow. Yes, Zaarmilla, this unhappy calf, for whom a thouſand holy Fakeers would have riſked their lives, was ſlain at the command of theſe inhuman Europeans, and devoured by them, without one pang of remorſe.

Does not nature itſelf revolt at ſuch an action? And, had any ſpark of religious knowledge enlightened their minds, would they not have perceived, that the calf they ſlew, was, if not ſo learned, at leaſt more pious and more uncontaminated by the

corruption of impure ideas, than themſelves. Tell me no more of the virtue of ſuch men. And no more, I conjure thee, think of incurring the wrath of Mahadeo, by diſhonouring thy Caſt, and forfeiting its ſublime privileges, at the inſtigation of a curioſity, which has doubtleſs been kindled in thy mind, by the powerful charms of magical incantations. Theſe ſpells would probably have failed in their effect, hadſt thou not incurred the diſpleaſure of the Dewtah, by neglecting to perform the duty to which every Hindoo is bound; that indiſpenſible duty of marriage. Four years have elapſed ſince, in obedience to the command of my father, I married the daughter of the reverend Gopaul. She was ill-favoured, and of a bad temper: ſo that, being diſguſted with her peeviſhneſs, and ſtill more with the plainneſs of her countenance, (for in a beautiful woman many errors may be forgiven) I parted with her ſome months

ſince, and preſenting her with her *ayammi ſhadee*, ſent her back to the houſe of her father. I will, therefore, with great pleaſure accept of your ſiſter for my wife. With this intention, I ſome time ago enquired after her diſpoſition, and heard that ſhe was beautiful, and good tempered; which is the utmoſt perfection in women. To what purpoſe ſhould they have judgment or underſtanding? were they not made ſubſervient to the will of man? If they are docile, and reſerved, with enough of judgment to teach them to adorn their perſons, and wear their jewels with propriety, and never preſuming to have a will of their own, follow implicitly the direction of their huſbands, ſtudying his temper, and accommodating themſelves to his humour, it is all that can be wiſhed for. As to all that you ſay of the cultivation of their underſtandings, I can only look upon it, as the ravings of a diſtempered imagination.

Bad as my opinion is of thoſe Engliſh Chriſtians, I cannot poſſibly imagine them to be ſo abſurd as to teach learning to their women. Allowing it poſſible (which I am very far from allowing) that theſe creatures, whoſe ſole delight is finery, who were born to amuſe, to pleaſe, and to continue the race of man, ſhould be capable of entering the ſacred porch which leads to the temple of knowledge, what would be the conſequence of their being admitted to it? would their ſteps be ſteady enough to conduct them through the labyrinths of that awful fane? No. Contenting themſelves with the firſt tinſel ornament that caught their eyes, they would come out at the firſt opening of vanity; and having made a depoſit of their gentleneſs and humility, would clothe themſelves with the robes of arrogance, and reſt dauntleſs upon the hollow reed of ſelf-conceit. Such are the conſequences that

would reſult, from the fooliſh attempt, of teaching women more than nature deſigned them to know.

Let Zaarmilla, therefore, hearken to the voice of reaſon; and, at the ſame time that he gives his ſiſter to be the wife of his friend, let him accept for his ſpouſe the ſiſter of Maandaara. Without being ſtrictly beautiful, her countenance is pleaſing: a mole of extreme beauty is ſeated on her cheek: and her eyes ſparkle like the gems of Golconda. She has been taught humility and obedience, and has never converſed with any man, except her father and her brother. I know ſo well the tenderneſs and extreme lenity of thy diſpoſition, that it is neceſſary to caution thee againſt extreme indulgence, and to put thee in mind of the words of the ſacred Shaſtra *, which ſayeth, 'that a man both

* See Halhed's Tranſlation of the Gentoo Laws.

day and night muſt keep his wife ſo much in ſubjection, that ſhe by no means be miſtreſs of her own actions. If ſhe have her own free will, notwithſtanding her having ſprung from a ſuperior Caſt, ſhe will nevertheleſs act amiſs.'

If thou art inclined to diſmiſs the ſpirit of deluſion, and liſten to the voice of thy friend, I will meet thee, not at Ferrockabad, but at Rampore; as, through the intereſt of certain friends, I have ſome hopes given me that Fyzoola Khan may look *upon me* with the eye of kindneſs, and probably reſtore me to the poſſeſſion of my fathers. I have juſt received intelligence of the arrival of Sheermaal from England; whether he was induced to accompany the great man to whoſe ſervices he had lent the aſſiſtance of his abilities; and from him I make no doubt of receiving ſuch information reſpecting the country he has

ſeen, as will ſatisfy thy mind, and reſtore thee to the right uſe of thy underſtanding.

What can I ſay more?

LETTER III.

From the SAME *to the* SAME.

THE powerful influence of the *Goitterie* *, which I have employed ſome expert, and holy Fakeers to uſe, in order to diſpoſſeſs thy mind from the influence of the magic of the Chriſtians, will, I hope, be aided in their operation by the following account of the obſervations of Sheermaal, during his abode in England.

If, then, Zaarmilla has any value for the peace of Maandaara, he will inſtantly quit the wild and fantaſtic project of ſeek-

* A Gentoo incantation.

ing for truth in the regions of darkneſs; and remaining in the land of his fathers, receive the gifts of happineſs into the boſom of content.

Let thine ears now liſten to the words of Sheermaal; and from his experience be thou contented to receive the fruits of wiſdom.

LETTER IV.

The Bramin Sheermaal, *to* Kiſheen Neêay Māāndāāra.

THE letter of the noble and illuſtrious Rajah, I have read with the moſt profound reſpect; and at thy requeſt ſhall haſten to remove from his eyes the film of prejudice, and to convince him that the opinions he has conceived, concerning the Chriſtians of England, are altogether falſe and erroneous. I do not wonder, that the enlightened mind of the noble Rajah, ſhould have conceived a prediliction in favour of a people, who ſeem deſtined to make ſo conſpicuous a figure in the annals of Aſia. As a race of brave and daring mortals,

choſen by Veeſhnû to curb the fury of deſtructive tyranny, to blunt the ſword of the deſtroyer, and break the galling fetters of the oppreſſed, I, and every Hindoo, muſt unite with him in pronouncing their eulogium: but as to the principles which actuate their conduct, their religion, their laws, and their manners, the mind of the noble Rajah has been immerſed in error.

The learned Pundit, whoſe fame has extended from the walls of Lucknoo to the banks of Barampooter *, had ſufficiently opened my underſtanding. It became evident, that whatever was in any degree excellent or admirable, throughout the Bobor Logue †, was an emanation from the ſhadow of wiſdom, a ray of

* The Tranſlator muſt acknowledge, that the fame of this learned Pundit has not reached ſo far as to acquaint her with his name.

† Habitable world.

light obliquely darting from the ſacred volume which iſſued from the chambers of the deep *. To aſcertain the certainty of this truth, I determined to viſit the remoteſt corner of the habitable world, and in the boſom of experience I have found the expected conviction †.

Let not the noble Rajah be deceived. Let him not vainly imagine the Chriſtians to be in poſſeſſion of ſuch an invaluable treaſure as the Shaſter he deſcribes; a

* The Vedas, or Hindoo Scriptures, ſaid in their allegorical mythology to have been recovered from the ſea, by the God Veeſhnû, in the form of a fiſh; who, after ſlaying the giant Hayagriva, tore from his belly the ſacred volumes which he had profanely ſwallowed, returned with them in triumph, and preſented them to Brahma. A print of Veeſhnû performing this ceremony is given in the ſecond volume of Maurice's Indian Antiquities.

† The meaning of the Bramin is rather obſcure; it is, however, ſufficiently obvious to eſtabliſh his character as a *ſyſtematic traveller*.

Shaſter promulgating the glorious hopes of immortality; calculated to produce the univerſal reign of peace and juſtice, the exerciſe of the pureſt benevolence, and the moſt perfect virtue. Let not the Rajah think that the knowledge of ſuch a book as this exiſts among Chriſtians. If it did, is it poſſible, that in the ten years in which I have intimately converſed with Chriſtians of all ranks and orders; military commanders, chiefs inveſted with the powers of civil authority, and men who made the ſtudy of literature their employment and delight, is it poſſible, I ſay, that I ſhould never once have heard of ſuch a book? Let the noble Rajah be the judge.

That a book of ancient origin, vulgarly called *the bible*, was once known to the Engliſh, I have had certain information: but far from containing doctrines of ſuch a nature as the Rajah has announced, the firſt proof of genius which a

young man gives to the world, upon his iſſuing from the ſchools, is to ſpeak of it with a becoming degree of contempt. Indeed, to extirpate from ſociety all regard for the pernicious doctrines it contains, has long been the primary object of attention to the enlightened philoſophers of Europe. How much the book is deteſted by theſe ſage philoſophers, may eaſily be inferred, when I declare, that of the many philoſophers I have met with, who had moſt vehemently ſpoken and written againſt it, not one had contaminated himſelf by deigning to examine its contents. One of theſe great men, a profound writer of hiſtory, has given to the world a work more voluminous than the Mahabbarat, more brilliant than the odes of Sancha, undertaken, and accompliſhed, as I was well aſſured, with the benevolent purpoſe of convincing his countrymen of the ſuperiority of the Mahommedan to the Chriſtian faith. Whether theſe en-

lightened men will ever really ſucceed in their intention of eſtabliſhing the religion of Mahomet in England, is, however, in my opinion, rather doubtful.

However alluring the doctrine of polygamy, and the view of the Mahommedan Paradiſe may be to men of taſte and ſentiment, there are ſome obſtacles which, I apprehend, would, in the opinion of the people, be inſurmountable. The chief of theſe I take to be the prohibition of wine, the ſtrict faſt of Ramozin, and, above all, the injunctions * concerning the treatment of ſlaves, which are ſo mild and generous, that the Chriſtians of England, who are concerned in the traffic of their fellow-creatures (and who form a large and reſpectable part of the community) would never be brought to ſubmit to its authority.

* See Sale's Koran, and Hamilton's tranſlation of the Hedeya.

From the deluſive opinion entertained in the ſublime mind of the Rajah, of the religion of the Chriſtians, he will, no doubt, be inclined to imagine, that their philanthropy embraces the wide circle of the human race. How far the rule of 'doing to others, as they would be done by, in the like caſe,' actuates the Chriſtians of England, may be learned from the following hiſtory of my voyage.

As I attended the family of a great man, I had the advantage of being accommodated on board one of their ſhips of war, a huge edifice, whoſe ſides were clothed with thunder. This mighty fabric contained near ſeven hundred people, governed by a few Chiefs, whoſe commands were obeyed with the quickneſs of the lightning's glance, and the frown of whoſe diſpleaſure was followed by the ſeverity of puniſhment. We had made two thirds of our voyage to the coaſt of Britain, when

a ſhip appeared at a diſtance, which our ſkilful mariners ſoon perceived to be in diſtreſs. I had ſo often witneſſed what I thought to be the exerciſe of cruelty during my abode in this ſea-borne fortreſs, that I did not expect the diſtreſſes of people, whom they had never ſeen, would excite much of their compaſſion. In this, however, I was miſtaken. To my aſtoniſhment, every effort was inſtantly made to afford relief to theſe ſtrangers; and I beheld the toil-ſtrengthened nerves of theſe lions of the ocean, ſtrained by the moſt vigorous exertions, to ſave the almoſt ſinking veſſel. At length, the object of their labours was effected; and they, who had been ſo zealous to ſave, now appeared perfectly indifferent to the expreſſions of gratitude and admiration which were poured out by the people, whom they had ſo gallantly delivered from the jaws of deſtruction. Our carpenter was employed to repair the breaches in the unfortunate veſſel.

And, as the weather was now calm, curioſity led the principal people of our company to viſit the ſhip of the ſtrangers. I was among the number. But Oh! that I could obliterate from my mind the memory of a ſcene, the horrors of which no pen can deſcribe, no tongue can utter, no imagination conceive. It was an Engliſh veſſel, which had been on a voyage to the coaſt of Africa, from whence it was now proceeding to the Britiſh ſettlements in the Weſt Indies, with a cargo, not of ſilver and gold, not of coſtly ſpices and rich perfumes, but of ſome hundreds of the moſt wretched of the human race; a cargo of ſlaves. Theſe miſerable beings, were here huddled together in the ſqualid cells of a moving dungeon. Their uncouth ſcreams, their diſmal groans, their countenances, on which were alternately depicted the images of fury, terror, and deſpair, the clanking of their chains, and the ſavage looks of the white barbarians, who com-

manded them, exhibited ſuch a ſcene, as mocks deſcription.

Surely, the magnanimous Rajah will not imagine, that the perpetrators of this cruelty could be the profeſſors of a religion of mercy. No. Had a ray of knowledge enlightened their underſtandings, through the tawny hue of the unlettered ſavage, they would have recogniſed the emanation of the creating Spirit; they would have perceived the kindred mind, which, in its progreſſive courſe through the ſtages of varied being, might one day inhabit the bodies of their own offspring. For my part, when I contemplated the ſcene before me, I anticipated, in imagination, the few ſwiftly rolling years, which might change the abode of the ſouls of theſe tyrant whites into the frames of woe-deſtined negroes; while the preſent victims of their cruelty, would in their turns, become the maſters, and, ſeizing the ſcorpion whip of

oppreſſion, retaliate their preſent ſufferings with all the bitterneſs of revenge. But, alas! the divine doctrine of retribution is unknown to theſe Chriſtians. No dread of after puniſhment reſtrains the remorſeleſs hand of cruelty. No apprehenſion of the vengeance of an offended Deity, diverts them from the greedy purſuits of avarice, or diſturbs the enjoyments of luxury. For let it not ſtagger your faith in my veracity, when I inform you, that all this aggregate of human miſery is incurred, in order to procure a luxurious repaſt to the pampered appetites of theſe voluptuaries, and that the unhappy negroes are torn from their country, their friends and families, for no other purpoſe, but to cultivate the ſugar-cane; a work of which the lazy Europeans are themſelves incapable.

When I mention the ſlaves of Chriſtians, let not your imagination turn to the bondſmen of Aſia, as if their ſituations were pa-

rallel. No. By the mild laws of our Shaſter, and even by the leſs benevolent inſtitutions of Mahammed, ſlaves are conſidered as people who, having bartered their liberty for protection, are entitled to the ſtricteſt juſtice, lenity, and indulgence. They are always treated with kindneſs, and are moſt frequently the friends and confidants of their maſters. But with theſe white ſavages, theſe mercileſs Chriſtians, they are doomed to ſuffer all that cruelty, inſtigated by avarice, and intoxicated by power, can inflict. Ah! beloved Hindoſtan! happy country! paradiſe of regions! the plant which in the tranſ-Atlantic iſlands is fattened with the blood of the wretched, with thee raiſes its blooming head, a voluntary offering to thy pure and innocent children. That luſcious cane, which the inhabitants of Europe purchaſe by the enormous maſs of miſery, is on the banks of the Ganga, the excluſive property of the laughing Deity, the heart-piercing

Cama; with it the ſon of Mayo forms the bow, from which his flowery ſhafts are thrown at the ſons of men *: with it the blameleſs hermit approaches the altars of the rural Gods; and from it the ſimple repaſts of the favoured of Veeſhnû receive their higheſt reliſh.

But my obſervations on the religion of the people of England, ſtop not here. To obtain complete information upon this ſubject, was the object I kept perpetually in my view. And I hope it is known to the Rajah, that a Bramin of my character is not eaſily to be deceived. The cuſtom of dedicating the ſeventh day to acts of piety and devotion, is mentioned by the Rajah as an inſtitution, admirably calculated for keeping up the ſpirit of a religion, which was intended for the purification of the heart, and of which the duties of peni-

* See the Introduction.

tence and ſelf-examination formed conſtituent parts. Alas! how groſsly has his ſimplicity been impoſed upon. It is indeed obſerved as a holiday by the lower Caſts, and ſpent by ſome of the induſtrious orders of mechanics in the innocent amuſement of walking in the fields, accompanied by their wives and children. By thoſe of leſs ſober manners, it is employed in the indulgence of gluttony, and the moſt depraved intemperance. By the higher Caſts, it is altogether unobſerved, except as a day particularly propitious to the purpoſe of travelling. A ſelect number, from all the different Caſts, occaſionally amuſe themſelves by attending, for an hour or two, on the mornings of that day, at certain large buildings, called Churches; a practice which they doubtleſs continue in conformity to ſome ancient cuſtom, the origin of which is now forgotten, though the practice continues to be partially obſerved. Curioſity once led me into one of

theſe churches, where a young man dreſſed in white began the performance of the ceremony. Had it not been for the careleſſneſs of his manner, I ſhould have been tempted to believe that he was engaged in offering prayers to the Deity; and ſo far as the extreme rapidity of his utterance would permit me to judge, ſome things he ſaid ſo plainly alluded to a future ſtate of exiſtence, that one, leſs truly informed than I was, might have been led into a belief that ſome ſuch notions had actually been entertained among them. The ceremonies of this day were concluded by an elderly prieſt, in a black robe, who read, in a languid and monotonous tone, from a ſmall book, which he held in his hand, a ſort of exhortation; the truths contained in which, ſeemed equally indifferent to himſelf and to his audience. Nor did the little attention that was paid to his diſcourſe ſeem to give him any offence, or to impel him to ſpeak in a more energe-

tic manner; though it probably haſtened his concluſion; at which he had no ſooner arrived, than the countenances of his auditors brightened, and they congratulated one another on their being emancipated from the fatigue of this tireſome ceremony.

Had I never penetrated farther into the character of theſe Chriſtians, I ſhould have conſidered them as beings altogether incapable of a ſerious and profound attention to the performance of any religious duty; but a deeper inveſtigation convinced me of the contrary, and that in the performance of ſuch ceremonies as they deemed *of real importance*, theſe trifling people could evince a degree of aſſiduity and perſeverance, that would have done honour to a Sanée aſſee*.

* A religious recluſe.

We are now in poſſeſſion of ſo many accurate engravings and minute deſcriptions of the extraordi-

The rites to which I allude, may, in my opinion, eaſily be traced to the ſacred inſtitutions of the beloved of Brahma; the nation which is the pure fountain of all human wiſdom.

To the intelligent mind of the noble Rajah, it is well known how our great anceſtors, incomparable in wiſdom, ordained ſuch myſtical repreſentations of the ſuperior intelligences; as it is not lawful for any but the moſt holy and learned of the Bramins to explore. The moſt pious of the ſacred Caſt, after purifying themſelves from worldly thoughts by years of abſtinence, ſpent in the ſilence of ſolemn groves, are, by much application, and unwearied ſtudy, enabled to perceive the true mean-

nary ſculpture which decorates the temples of the Hindoos, that there are few readers to whom a detail of them would not be ſuperfluous.

ing of thoſe repreſentations hewn in the ſtupendous rock, or carved in the lofty walls of ancient edifices, which, to the eyes of the vulgar, appear uncouth images of ſtone. And it is doubtleſs from this wiſe example of our ancient Bramins, that the prieſts of all religions have learned the art of concealing the ſimplicity of truth, under the dark and impenetrable cloud of ſymbolical myſtery, which none but they themſelves can fully explain. The knowledge of the vulgar is the death of zeal. But deep is the reverence of ignorance.

It was not then, from the people engaged in the rites I mention, that I could expect information concerning them: but I had a better inſtructor in the depth of my own ſagacity, which ſoon taught me, that the object of their moſt ſerious devotion was ſtrictly analogous to the ſymbols of our Dewtah, not indeed cut in the ſolid rock of gloomy caverns; not hewn on the

walls of ſacred temples; but, correſpondent to the trifling genius of theſe ſilly people, painted upon ſmall ſlips of ſtiff paper! Neither is the manner in which theſe devotions are performed exactly ſimilar to ours. It is not neceſſary that thoſe devotees ſhould perform the ſeven ablutions; neither do they rub their bodies with earth; neither do they cover their heads with cow-dung: and, inſtead of ſolemn proſtration before theſe painted objects of their idolatry, they take them familiarly into their hands, and toſs them one after another upon a table covered with green cloth; turn them up and down, ſometimes gazing upon them with momentary admiration, as they lie proſtrate on the middle of the table; then again, ſeizing them with holy ardour, they turn them haſtily upon their faces. And to this Poojah * of idols, termed CARDS, do the major part

* Worſhip.

of the people devote their time; ſacrificing every enjoyment of life, as well as every domeſtic duty to the performance of this ſingular devotion.

It is ſaid, that it is incumbent *only* on a 'profeſſed hermit *utterly* to renounce his paſſions, and worldly purſuits: but that it is ſufficient for a domeſtic character to refrain from their abuſe.' The zeal for the Poojah of cards inſpires a more exalted degree of ſelf-denial: I have known it lead its ardent votaries to exclude the ſoul-enlivening rays of the golden ſun, in the fineſt evenings of their ſhort-lived ſummer; and while the nightingale warbled its tale of love to the liſtening roſe, and all the beauties of nature glowed around them, I have beheld them turn from the temptation with heroic firmneſs, and placing themſelves at the altars of their idols, remain immoveably fixed in that devotion, which abſorbed the powers of their ſoul.

Little as I am inclined to coincide with the opinion of the Rajah, relative to the ſuperiority of the females of Europe in any other particular, I muſt confeſs, that in their unwearied aſſiduity to the Poojah of cards, they evince a degree of conſtancy ſcarcely exceeded by a pious Yogee * in the act of penance.

The languor, ſo viſible in the countenances of the people aſſembled in the church, was never to be obſerved during the performance of this more important ceremony. Here, even the very Prieſt loſt the apathy which had *there* ſo ſtrongly

* An order of religious Recluſes, remarkable for the rigorous performance of the penitential duties, eſteemed by the Hindoos ſo eſſentially neceſſary toward the advancement of their happineſs in a future ſtate. The voluntary penances undertaken by theſe pious Yogees, are frequently ſo ſevere as to excite an equal degree of aſtoniſhment and horror.

marked his countenance. The attention of his fellow worſhippers was no longer a matter of indifference to him. His zeal was kindled into fervor, and broke forth into the ſeverity of reproach againſt a female who ſat oppoſite to him, for exhibiting ſome tranſient mark of negligence in the performance of the duty in which ſhe was now engaged.

Univerſally as the Poojah of cards is eſtabliſhed throughout the country, it has not, in the remoteſt provinces, been able entirely to ſupercede another ſpecies of idolatry, which has clearly, and indiſputably, been borrowed from the manners of their eaſtern progenitors. This is no other than the worſhip of certain birds, and quadrupeds, which are held ſo ſacred by their worſhippers, that the preſervation of their lives occupies, I am well aſſured, many volumes of their laws, and has employed the chief ſtudy of their ſapient Le-

giſlators. I ſhould have wiſhed to obtain much information upon a ſubject ſo curious; but all that I could learn, was, that the provincial Rajahs, devoted to the worſhip of theſe animals, are moſtly ſprung from the firſt Caſt. (A certain proof of their Braminical origin.) They deſpiſe the vain purſuit of literature; and conſcious of their native and inherent ſuperiority, they pique themſelves upon their ignorance of all the ſciences that are in eſteem among the lower orders of men.

From ſuch exalted perſonages much information was not to be looked for: but a circumſtance which occurred while I journeyed over the remote parts of the kingdom, threw ſufficient light upon the ſubject.

In one particular, however, the higher Caſts in that country muſt be acknowledged to differ widely from the race of

Brahma.—They are deficient in hoſpitality! Never did I ſee the doors of a great man open to receive the wearied traveller: the milk of his cows flows not into the ſtranger's diſh. Nay, ſo very rude and inhoſpitable are the manners of the people of high Caſt, that once upon a time, when, being overtaken by darkneſs in a rainy evening, I attempted to procure lodgings for myſelf and my attendant, at the houſe of one of theſe provincial Rajahs, which was ſituate near the road, I was not only denied admittance, but repulſed with the language of contempt, and neceſſitated to continue my route, in a dark and ſtormy evening, till the ſight of a peaſant's hut cheered my heart with the hope of ſhelter. I was not diſappointed; for in this country the ſpirit of hoſpitality is only to be found beneath a roof of thatch. The decent matron, who inhabited this lowly hut, received me with looks of cordial welcome. Five blooming children ſurrounded the

blazing fire, whoſe cheerful light was reflected from the bright utenſils that adorned the white waſhed walls. My firſt appearance diſmayed the little train, but ſome candied ſweetmeats, with which I preſented them, quickly reconciled them to my complexion. The genii, who delight to revel in the troubled air, howled around this humble dwelling, and pouring the daſhing torrent from the black-boſomed clouds of night, they heard with joy the thunder's roar, while nimbly following the lightning's flaſh, they exulted in the mingled tempeſt. The pale hue of terror ſat upon the matron's cheek: ſhe liſtened, with anxiety and impatience, for the voices of her huſband and her ſon, who were not yet returned from the labours of the day: and while her own fears increaſed with the horrors of the tempeſt, ſhe employed herſelf in appeaſing thoſe of the infant group, who clung to her, demanding, with ac-

cents of clamourous ſorrow, the return of their father and their brother.

When the ſtorm a little abated of its violence, the little creatures ran by turns to the door, eagerly peeping into the dark abyſs of night, in hopes of diſcovering their approach. The anxious mother added fuel to the already blazing fire; again ſhe ſwept the unſoiled hearth; and again adjuſted the chairs, which had long been placed for the reception of the ſupporters of her hope. At length, the well known ſteps were heard; every heart fluttered with joy, and every little hand was ſtretched out, eager to receive the paternal and fraternal embrace. The old man and his ſon were for ſome time occupied in returning the careſſes of their family; which they did with the tenderneſs of affection: and then the venerable maſter of this humble abode came forward, to welcome me to a ſhare of the comforts it afforded. He

had looked at me earneſtly for ſome time, when, to my utter aſtoniſhment, he addreſſed me in my native language. The Mhors he ſpoke was but indifferent, but it was intelligible, and more charming to my ears than the muſic of the ſeven genii.

In order to account for what appeared to me ſuch an extraordinary phenomenon, he told me that, in early life, he had been tempted, by the God of Love, to win the affections of a damſel, whoſe beauty had touched the heart of the village Lord. The place of wife, in the eſtabliſhment of this great man, was already occupied by the daughter of a neighbouring Rajah; but he had probably been convinced by the philoſophers, of the propriety of the ſyſtem of Mahommet; and thought that the damſel, though the daughter of a mechanic, would be no unworthy ornament of his zenana. It is not to be wondered at that he ſhould be filled with indignation

at the preſumption of the young peaſant, who dared to interfere with his pleaſures, and diſappoint his ſchemes, by marrying the object of his hopes. It is not proper that inferiors ſhould be permitted to defeat the intentions of their Lords with impunity. This great man was of the ſame opinion; and, in the height of his reſentment againſt his ſucceſsful rival, he had him torn from the arms of his bride, and ſent in a company of ſoldiers, who were all collected in the ſame arbitrary manner (probably as a puniſhment for the ſame ſort of offence) to the Eaſt Indies. Here this unfortunate martyr to love ſpent eleven years in the ſervice of the Company, in the rank of a petty officer: when having, by his economy, ſaved a ſum ſufficient for the purpoſes of humble competence, he obtained leave to return to his native country. As the gay pennant, though forced to obey the preſſure of the changeful breeze, ſtill clings to its beloved maſt, and, at the

return of every ſhort-lived calm, flutters round the object to which it was in youth united; ſo the heart of this honeſt peaſant, in all the ſtorms of fortune, hovered round the cottage that contained his wife and child. At length, her obſcure retirement was gladdened by his preſence. By the employment of her needle, ſhe had procured, during his abſence, an honourable and virtuous ſubſiſtence for herſelf and ſon. The little fortune he had brought from India was loſt by the villainy of the agent into whoſe hands he had entruſted it. But in the endearments of mutual affection, this honeſt couple had a fund of felicity, which the malice of fortune could not deſtroy. Both the good man and his ſon found employment for their induſtry in cutting down the trees of a neighbouring wood: a work which had been committed to their care, and amply recompenced their diligence. When they returned from their labour, the cheerful appearance of the well-ordered fa-

mily at home, the ſmiling welcome of the little innocents, and the affectionate tenderneſs of the worthy matron, preſented to them a reward which went farther than the gifts of fortune have power to penetrate :—it reached the heart.

The recital of theſe circumſtances was made to me during the moſt cheerful repaſt that I ever ſaw Chriſtians partake of. When it was ended, a ceremony enſued, which having never ſeen practiſed at any other period, I have reaſon to think *peculiar to themſelves*. Upon a hint from the old ſoldier, his eldeſt daughter preſented him with a very large book, from which, with a clear and ſolemn voice, he read ſome admirable inſtructions and exhortations. The ſublime and commanding energy with which theſe precepts were expreſſed, might lead to a concluſion, that this was a copy of the ſame Shaſter with which the departed Saib Percy preſented

the learned Rajah: but many obſtacles oppoſe themſelves to this ſuppoſition. Could we believe that a book of ſuch diſtinguiſhed authority, unheard of among the learned, and totally unknown among the ſuperior Caſts, ſhould yet be found familiar in the cottage of a peaſant? It is too abſurd for the ſhadow of probability to reſt upon.

But to return to the religious rites of theſe ſimple people; which, as I have obſerved, differ eſſentially from all that had hitherto come within my obſervation: for inſtead of the Poojah of cards, which at that hour would have been performed in the families of the higher Caſts, when the old man had ſhut the book, he knelt down, his wife and blooming infants following his example. The latter claſped their little hands, and held them up to heaven, while he lifted up his voice, calling upon the unſeen, omniſcient, and immortal Preſerver,

to bleſs them, and to accept from hearts of gratitude the offering of praiſe and thankfulneſs. I cannot account for it, but there was ſomething in this whole ceremony which greatly affected my mind; and I could not help, while I liſtened to the ſimple, but fervent devotion of this virtuous labourer, feeling for him a degree of veneration, even ſuperior to what I had experienced for the Prieſt, whoſe zeal had been ſo conſpicuous at the Poojah of cards.

In the morning, the ſame rites were again repeated; after which, I took leave of this innocent and happy family; the old man inſiſting that, as I had come ſome miles out of my way, his ſon ſhould accompany me to the village where I had directed my ſervant and horſe to meet me. The lad willingly obeyed the commands of his father, and we ſet out together. He was a handſome youth, of about twen-

ty years of age, and of a ſenſible and intelligent countenance. Taking a path through a corn field, it being now the latter end of harveſt, we met a young peaſant, who carried a gun, which he frequently fired, to frighten the crows and other birds from the grain. My companion took the weapon of deſtruction into his hand to examine it: and in that unhappy moment, in which the Goddeſs of Miſchance preſided, a group of partridges appeared before him: he involuntarily ſtruck the flint; the report reſounded through the air, and oh! unfortunate deſtiny, ſeven of theſe ſacred birds were laid rolling in the duſt. He had no time to conſider of the fatal deed; for, in a moment, two men, whom the buſhes had concealed from our view, darted on the guilty youth, wreſted the weapon of deſtruction from his trembling hand, and, with many imprecations of vengeance, inſiſted upon his immediately attending them

before the awful tribunal of aſſembled Magiſtrates, who were now exerciſing the ſacred functions of their office in the neighbouring village. It was then I learned the real magnitude of my friend's offence. For I was then informed, that to preſerve theſe ſacred birds from being injured by the unhallowed hands of any of the lower Caſt, the ſevereſt laws were promulgated: and as the Zimeendars in the office of the magiſtracy, before whom theſe offences were tried, were all of them worſhippers of the rural Dewtah, they never ſuffered the ſtern ſentence of juſtice to be ſoftened at the ſuggeſtion of mercy.

As it is not good to forſake a friend in his adverſity, we entered the temple of juſtice together. In this awful tribunal, ſeated in two large chairs, we found the offended Magiſtrates. The firſt of theſe judges ſeemed fully conſcious of his dignity; which was indeed very great;

uniting in himſelf the triple offices of Prieſt, Zimeendar, and Magiſtrate of the place. The other was a Pundit, learned in the law; called, in the language of theſe people, an attorney. No ſooner did the witneſſes of my friend's guilty deed, preſent the unhappy culprit before them, producing at the ſame time the murdered birds, and the deſtructive engine of their diſſolution, than the murmur of indignation aroſe; the cauſe in which they were then hearing evidence was inſtantly diſmiſſed: it was, indeed, only concerning a man who was ſaid to have beaten his wife almoſt to death: a trifling crime, in the eyes of theſe Magiſtrates, when compared to the murder of ſeven partridges!

The ſon of the ſoldier attempted to ſpeak in his own defence, but was prevented by the firſt judge, who declared that the proof was ſufficient for his condemnation, and that he never would hear

any thing in favour of A POACHER: (a name given by this ſect to the enemies of their idolatry.) From the tone of wrath with which he pronounced theſe words, I ſaw that the young man's fate was determined; and when, after ſome conſultation between themſelves, the younger judge aroſe to pronounce his ſentence, I expected, with ſorrow, to have heard the irrevocable mandate of immediate death; and knowing how vindictive the prieſts of all religions uſually are toward thoſe who have treated with contempt the objects of their ſuperſtitious veneration, I ſhould have been well pleaſed to have compounded for his ſimple death, unattended by the tortures which I feared might be inflicted on him; for a crime which, I plainly ſaw, was thought of by his judges with horror. Judge then with what a mixture of aſtoniſhment and delight, I heard the mild and merciful ſentence uttered by the Pundit, which pronounced no other ſentence of pu-

niſhment, but that of paying a ſum of money!

How univerſal is the ſin of ingratitude? When I expected to behold this young man embracing the feet of his merciful judges with grateful rapture, I heard him, with aſtoniſhment, venture to expoſtulate with his benefactors upon his utter inability to pay ſo great a fine. He mentioned the ſituation of his parents; ſaid they depended upon his labour for ſupport; and that, ſhould his judges perſevere in inflicting the payment of ſo large a ſum upon him, it muſt deprive them of his aſſiſtance; or, by robbing them of the little ſavings of their induſtry, reduce their young ones to penury, and cauſe them to eat the bread of bitterneſs in their old age. 'Let pity for my aged parents induce you to ſoften the rigour of my ſentence,' cried the ungrateful youth, 'and, though a thouſand partridges were to ſtart up before me,

I ſwear I ſhall never injure one feather of their wings.' Alas! his eloquence was loſt. The judges remained inexorable: till at length, being touched with the ſorrow of the young man, I reſolved to addreſs them in the beſt Engliſh I was maſter of. 'Mild, upright, and merciful judges,' cried I, 'believe not that I ſpeak to excuſe the crime of which this young man has been guilty. No. I have ever been taught to pay reſpect to the Dewtahs of whatever country I was in. With the Perſic Magi I have bent in ſolemn adoration of the ſolar orb; while, with other equally enlightened nations of the eaſt, I have demonſtrated my reſpect for the crocodile, the jackall, and the monkey. Since fate has brought me into this renowned kingdom, I have, in the great capital, attended, with due ſolemnity, the Poojah of cards: and now, that I am made acquainted with the religion of the Rajahs of the provinces, I judge of your feelings, moſt

venerable Magiſtrates, upon the preſent occaſion, by what my own would have been, had any baſe-born Sooder dared to lift his impious hands againſt one of the ſacred cows who range the flowery meads of Burrampooter. But ſince, in the overflowing of your clemency, you have condeſcended to limit the deſerved puniſhment of this audacious youth to the payment of a fine, I hope you will extend the ſhadow of your goodneſs ſo far, as to accept the money from a ſtranger.' They ſtared at one another, aſtoniſhed, no doubt, at the boldneſs of my ſpeech; but, nevertheleſs, were ſo kind as graciouſly to accept of the gold I offered them, and to ſuffer my companion to depart with me in peace.

After giving him ſome good advice againſt meddling, in future, with the Dewtah of the country, and preſenting him with ſome pieces of gold for his family, I diſ-

miſſed him, and proceeded on my journey.

In the courſe of this tour, I had the courage to penetrate into the northern regions of this united kingdom of Britain, where mountains, more ſtupendous than thoſe of Upper Tartary, heave their bare brown backs to the mercileſs arrows of the keen-edged wind: where the bright-faced luminary of heaven is wrapt in the eternal veil of clouds and ſtorms; but where, in the uncultivated boſom of heath-covered deſarts, reſides a people, whoſe origin is more ancient than the rocks, whoſe gloomy ſummits overhang their dwellings.

It was with a view of gaining ſome information in regard to the chronology of this ancient nation, that I was induced to viſit it. I had heard that the original Caſts into which theſe, as well as other nations, had been divided at their creation,

were here preſerved in their original purity and perfection. For this is another particular, in which the Rajah of Almorah has been groſsly deceived, or miſinformed. Inſtead of being all of *one* Caſt, as he imagines, the people throughout Great Britain are divided into *three* Caſts, all ſeparate, and diſtinct from each other; and which are commonly known by the ſeveral appellations of PEOPLE OF FAMILY, PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY, and PEOPLE OF STYLE, or faſhion. The firſt two are of much more ancient origin than the other Caſt; which, indeed, appears to have ſprung from an unnatural mixture of the others; like the tribes of * Buhran Sunker, in Hindoſtan. But what is extraordinary, and entirely peculiar to the Caſt of *people of ſtyle*, is, that admiſſion may be obtained by thoſe who were not born in it, nay, who have ſprung from the loweſt of the

* See Gentoo Laws, page 43.

tribe, called PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY; and theſe people, thus admitted, I have ever obſerved to be moſt tenacious of the rights and privileges of their new Caſt, treating thoſe who ſtill remain in that, which they have left, with the utmoſt contempt, breaking off all connexion with them, and frequently denying (particularly in the preſence of other *people of faſhion*) that they ever had any acquaintance with them: an aſſeveration always made with peculiar warmth, when theſe newly made *people of faſhion* are known to be under any particular obligations to the PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY. The mode of initiation into this Caſt, I ſuppoſe to be made by the ceremonies of ablution: and certain ſtreams, and ſprings, of myſterious efficacy, are to be found in various parts of the kingdom; where I have reaſon to think the ceremonies of initiation are uſually performed. A reſort to theſe ſprings, called watering-places, at certain ſeaſons of the year, be-

ing preſcribed to *people of ſtyle*, and all the candidates for that Caſt, as an indiſpenſible duty.

Among theſe candidates, the moſt certain method of procuring ſucceſs, is an aſſiduous devotion to the Poojah of cards: liberal offerings of gold, at the altars of theſe little painted idols, having frequently procured the honours of initiation, to the moſt low-born, low-bred, and illiterate perſonages in the community. The flood of wealth, which the golden ſtream of commerce has diffuſed over the kingdom of England, has greatly contributed to the exaltation of this upſtart tribe: but in the northern kingdom, which is now blended with it (as Bahar is with Oriſſa) the barrier between *people of family* and *people of no family*, has been too ſtrong for the tide of wealth to break, too powerful for the teeth of time to deſtroy. I was extremely anxious to gain an inſight into the chrono-

logical annals of this moſt ancient nation, but could obtain none that was anywiſe ſatisfactory. By a ſtrange cuſtom, the cultivation of letters is confined to the *people of no family*; who are at no pains to trace the origin of the firſt Caſt, beyond that of their own; but by my own obſervation, confirmed by the hints I received from all the *people of family* with whom I converſed, it is evident that a period of many thouſand years muſt have elapſed between the creation of the two Caſts. Indeed, to believe that the venerable and exalted caſt of *people of family*, ſhould have ſprung from one common parent with the *people of no family*, is equally abſurd as to ſuppoſe, that in the revolution of the few years that are doomed to terminate a tranſient and uncertain exiſtence, they ſhould moulder into the ſame ſort of duſt! Baſe ſlander on the inherent ſuperiority of birth! The minds of the *people of family*, are filled with too juſt an idea of their own dignity to admit ſo injurious

a ſuppoſition. Conſcious of the bleſſing of ſuperior origin, the ancient Rajahs, and all who can boaſt a portion of their blood, never fail to expreſs a proper degree of contempt for the people of inferior Caſt: nor can the poſſeſſion of talents, the attainments of ſcience, or the exerciſe of the ſubliméſt virtue, ſerve, in any degree, in their eyes, to leſſen the invincible barrier that divides them.

Together with the cultivation of letters, the exerciſe of the Prieſtly function is uſually confined to the ſecond Caſt. Theſe men are more diſtinguiſhed for the regularity of their lives, and ſanctity of their deportment, than for their dexterity at the Poojah of cards, which in the ſouthern part of this kingdom is ſo eſſential a requiſite in the duty of a prieſt. The ceremonies of their religion are ſomewhat ſimilar to thoſe of the cottager; they are no ſtrangers to the duties of hoſpitality, and re-

commend the enlightening ſtudy of literature both by their precept and example. In all other reſpects, the characteriſtic virtues, and peculiar cuſtoms of this nation, are ſo evidently of Hindoo origin, that nothing, but the moſt wilful blindneſs, could make any one aſſert the contrary.

As the illuſtrious Rajahs of Hindoſtan, when ſitting in the midſt of their wide-extended poſſeſſions, forget not to bend before the Bramin, who, to procure nouriſhment for his family, laboureth in his garden, in like manner the people of whom I ſpeak, retain the dignity of their Caſt, even when compelled by poverty to exerciſe any trade in order to procure a livelihood: and, as in India, members of the tribe of Brahma are frequently found exerciſing the employments of commerce and agriculture, ſo, in this ancient nation, do *people of family* often condeſcend to become weavers, ſhoemakers, and barbers, with-

out forfeiting Caſt, or in the leaſt abating of the high idea of their own inherent ſuperiority. It is not ſo with *the people of ſtyle*, who, by entering into any of theſe employments, loſe all the privileges of their Caſt; a circumſtance, which occaſions numbers of the poorer branches of that tribe to live in a humiliating ſtate of pependence upon the richer, rather ſubmitting to any indignity, than run the riſk of *loſing Caſt*, by ſubmitting to work for their own ſubſiſtence.

The mode of living among theſe people, in which animal food is ſcarcely known, is another argument in favour of their Hindoo origin. Much might likewiſe be ſaid of the ſimilarity of ſound between Laird and Rajah; a ſimilarity, which, in the opinion of learned antiquarians, is more than ſufficient to eſtabliſh an etymology. Nor is this all; like us, they conſider themſelves a *diſtinct* and *favoured people*, ſupe-

rior to the reſt of the inhabitants of the earth, and do not fail to maintain, that whatever inſtances of courage, magnanimity, or heroic virtue, are diſplayed by any inhabitant of the other nations of the world, would, in ſimilar circumſtances, have been far exceeded by one of their own countrymen.

Theſe highly favoured people, being too tenacious of their dignity to admit ſtrangers (with whoſe pedigree they are unacquainted) into the honour of their ſociety; the perſon, to whom I was chiefly indebted for information, was the lady, at whoſe houſe I lodged. She was of the *people of family* Caſt; ſprung from an illuſtrious race; her fifteenth grandfather had been a mountain Rajah; and, in the ramifications of his blood, ſhe could boaſt a degree of affinity to one-and-twenty Lairds! She was forced, by the dictates of neceſſity, to make up articles of female attire for her

maintenance; but never worked, as ſhe herſelf aſſured me, for any but *people of her own Caſt*; and I was induced to believe her, from the marked contempt with which I obſerved her to treat all who had the misfortune to be born *people of no family*. This was particularly felt by a young woman of beautiful perſon, gentle manners, and good education, whom this high-born female, being equally ignorant of orthography, and arithmetic, was under the neceſſity of employing as an aſſiſtant in her buſineſs: and whoſe converſation, had it not been for the difference of the Caſts from which they ſprung, I ſhould have greatly preferred to that of her miſtreſs; but the couſin of one-and-twenty mountain Rajahs had too juſt a claim to my veneration, to be put in competition with the paltry advantages of youth, beauty, talents, and underſtanding!

It was in this houſe I obſerved, with pleaſure, the practice of that admirable degree of abſtemiouſneſs, the reverſe of which had, in the ſouthern part of the iſland, ſo frequently excited the feelings of horror, and diſguſt. The ſervants of this illuſtrious Bibby did not ſit down together to excite one another to acts of gluttony and intemperance: but after long, and rigorous abſtinence, they ſnatched the ſcanty morſel of ſimple viands which their prudent miſtreſs had allotted for them; nor, even at her own table, did I ever ſee a meal diſplayed, of which the moſt holy Fakeer might not have partaken without breaking his vows of ſelf-denial!

Thus hath thy ſervant clearly refuted, two of the propoſitions of the miſguided Rajah: and proved, in the moſt ſatisfactory manner, and from the moſt undoubted authority, that if ſuch a Shaſter as he ſpeaks of, *ever did exiſt*, it is now become alto-

gether *obſolete*, and entirely unknown; that the only devotion known to the majority of the community, is the Poojah of cards, and partridges; and that the people of Great Britain are, at this day, divided into ſeparate Caſts, as diſtinct from each other as the Bramin from the Kettrie.

There are other errors, into which the noble Rajah has ſufferred his mind to be led, which I could with equal eaſe refute, did I not know how eaſily the mind of a great man is diſguſted by prolixity.

What can I ſay more!

LETTER V.

From the Bramin *to* Māāndāāra.

LET the commands of Maandaara be obeyed. In the plenitude of my deſire to open the eyes of your miſguided friend, I haſten to proceed to a more particular deſcription of the education and manners of the females of England; which the illuſtrious Rajah has ſo erroneouſly conceived to be in ſome meaſure influenced by the doctrines of that obſolete Shaſter, which ſeems to exalt the dignity of the female mind, to an equality with that of the lords of the creation.

I ſhall begin with an account of the uſual mode of conducting the education

of females in England. How far that is of a nature calculated for 'lighting the torch of reaſon and expanding the germ of intellect,' let the wiſdom of the Rajah decide!

During the period of infancy theſe Chriſtian females (whoſe ſouls are, in the erring mind of Zaarmilla, deemed ſo precious) are permitted to receive their firſt ideas from mercenary attendants, always ignorant, and frequently vicious. When the riſing plant puts forth the tendrils of curioſity, which may at pleaſure be directed to the tree of knowledge, or ſuffered to twine round the hollow bamboo of prejudice, and folly: at that period, leaſt from the converſation of fathers or brothers, theſe young females might, peradventure, acquire ſome degree of information, they are removed from the poſſibility of ſuch deplorable conſequences, and placed where ſcience, reaſon, and common ſenſe, dare

not to intrude. In theſe Seminaries, far from being treated as 'beings, whoſe intellectual faculties are capable of progreſſive improvement through the ages of eternity,' their time is ſolely employed in learning a few tricks, ſuch as a monkey might very ſoon acquire, and theſe are called accompliſhments!

Judge how ridiculous it would be to make creatures, believed to be accountable to their Creator, for the employment of their talents, and the improvement of their virtues, ſpend the moſt precious years of life, in running their fingers over certain bits of wood, which are ſo contrived as to make a jingling ſort of noiſe, pleaſant enough when one is a little accuſtomed to it, but which, in the manner executed by them, very ſeldom equals what is every day to be heard from the itinerant muſicians that practice in the ſtreets!

Another ingenious contrivance for filling up that portion of time, which the friend of Maandaara ſuppoſes to be employed in the acquiſition of uſeful knowledge, is, by the aſſiſtance of a maſter (whoſe attendance is paid for at a vaſt expence) making wretched imitations of trees, and flowers, and this is called *learning to paint!* It appears as if great care was taken, to avoid the poſſibility of the female pupils ever arriving at any degree of perfection in the art, as I am well-informed, that not one in five hundred is ever capable of copying from nature, or of doing any thing, when left to herſelf, that is not many degrees inferior to the little pictures which may be purchaſed for the value of a rupee.

Another indiſpenſible part in the education of females of every Caſt, of every rank, and in every ſituation, is the knowledge of the language ſpoken in their

neighbouring nation. I was for ſome time at a great loſs to know what reaſon could be aſſigned for ſo ſtrange a cuſtom, and after many conjectures, I reſted in the belief, that as the French nation was frequently at war with the Engliſh, it might either be cuſtomary to ſend the women as Nircarrahs *, into the camp of the enemy, or, in caſe of defeat, to employ them in procuring terms of peace, which from the remarkable complaiſance of their adverſaries to the female ſex, it might be ſuppoſed, would be negociated by the Bibbys with peculiar advantage to their country. I was, however, forced to give up this concluſion, on being aſſured, that after years ſpent in the ſtudy of the language, as it is taught at theſe excellent Seminaries, few are capable of reading, and ſtill fewer of converſing, with any degree of fluency in this tongue: and that the only real ad-

* Spies.

vantage reſulting from it was, that by what they knew of it, they were enabled to underſtand the peculiar terms belonging to the articles of dreſs imported from that country, which had an acknowledged right of impoſing its faſhions on the other nations of Europe.

Dreſs is, indeed, *one* ſcience in which full ſcope is given to the faculties of theſe females: and the love of it, is at the great Schools of the Chriſtians, ſo ſucceſsfully inculcated, that it remains indelible to the lateſt period of life. Nor is the mode of education I ſpeak of confined ſolely to the children of the higher Caſts, it extends to all, even to the daughters of tradeſmen, and mechanics, who are employed, during the years of improvement, exactly in the manner I have deſcribed. All the difference is, that at inferior Schools, where inferior maſters are employed, the girls do not, perhaps, arrive at the art of running

their fingers over the bits of wood, called Keys of a Harpſichord, with an equal degree of velocity; they make rather more execrable copies, of more wretched pictures, and the knowledge they acquire of the French language does not, perhaps, enable them to run over the names of the new faſhions, with an equal degree of volubility; but as to making any attempt at inſtructing the daughters of Chriſtians, in any thing uſeful to themſelves, or ſociety, the idea would be deemed equally ridiculous in Seminaries of every claſs.

So far all is right. We behold women moving in their proper ſphere, learning no other art, ſave that of adorning their perſons; and inſpired with no other view, but that of rendering themſelves objects of pleaſure to the eyes of men. But how ſhall I aſtoniſh you, when I unfold the extreme inconſiſtency of the fooliſh Europeans, and inform you, that theſe uninſtruct-

ed women are frequently ſuffered to become intirely their own miſtreſſes; ſometimes entruſted with the management of large eſtates, and left at liberty to act for themſelves! Nay, that it is no uncommon thing for a man, who may, in other reſpects, by no means be conſidered as a fool, to leave his children to the care of his widow, by which means I have frequently ſeen a little family caſt upon the care, and depending for protection, on a poor, pretty, helpleſs being, incapable of any idea, ſave that of dreſs, or of any duty, except the Poojah of cards! How much wiſer is the inſtitution of Brahma, by which creatures, incapable of acting with propriety for themſelves, are effectually put out of the way of miſchief, by being burned with the bodies of their huſbands.—Wiſe regulations! Laudable practice! by which the number of *old women* is ſo effectually diminiſhed!

From what I have formerly ſaid, you will obſerve, that women do actually ſometimes carry on certain branches of trade; but to infer from this, that they are generally eſteemed capable of buſineſs, or receive ſuch an education as to enable them, if left deſtitute of the gifts of fortune, to enter into it, would be doing them great injuſtice. No, in that country, as well as in this, all men allow that there is nothing ſo amiable in a woman as the *helpleſſneſs* of *mental imbecility*; and even the women themſelves are ſo well convinced of this, that they would conſider it as an inſult to be treated like rational creatures. The love of independence is, therefore, a maſculine virtue, and though ſome few females are *unamiable* enough to dare to enter upon ſome employment for their ſupport, this conduct is very much diſcouraged, and not only properly diſcountenanced by the men, but held in abhorrence by all

women, who entertain a proper ſenſe of the amiableneſs of female weakneſs. The females, who belong to the Caſt of *people* of *ſtyle*, are particularly zealous in reprobating the exertions of female induſtry, and are careful to employ *men* only in all theſe branches, in which fortuneleſs women have audaciouſly endeavoured to procure ſubſiſtence; for this reaſon, when a family, by any of thoſe misfortunes occurring in a commercial country, happens to be reduced to poverty, the daughters of the family are either left a prey to ghaunt-eyed indigence, or doomed to eat the bitter bread of dependance, adminiſtered with ſparing hand, and grudging heart, by ſome cold relative! Equally ignorant, and equally helpleſs, as the females of Hindoſtan, their ſituation is far more deſtitute and pitiable. By the admirable inſtitutions of our laws, it is ordained 'that a woman ſhall by no meaas be left to herſelf, but that, in caſe her neareſt relations are inca-

pable of taking care of her, that duty ſhall devolve upon the Magiſtrate *.' But, among the Chriſtians of England, they are as deſtitute of protection as of inſtruction.

The miſguider of the mind of Zaarmilla, has, it muſt be confeſſed, mixed ſome truth with the abundance of his falſhoods. When he told him, that it was cuſtomary in his country to teach women to read and write, he did not advance the thing which was not. It is true, that they are actually taught both, though for what purpoſe thoſe keys of knowledge are put into their hands, it is not eaſy to imagine; few bad conſequences, however, are found to reſult from this practice, as it is in general ſo wiſely managed, as to be very little prejudicial to the intereſts of ignorance; and is ſeldom employed for any other purpoſe, than that of reading motely tales of love and mur-

* See Gentoo Laws.

der, of which care is taken to furniſh them with an abundant ſupply, from certain ſtorehouſes of traſh, called circulating libraries.

The ſyſtem of female education, ſuch as I have deſcribed, is now almoſt univerſally practiſed over the iſland of Great Britain; though I have heard that, till lately, a ſyſtem of a different nature was prevalent in the northern part of the united kingdom. There, inſtead of the Poojah of cards, it was then cuſtomary for the mothers of families to employ themſelves in the education of their children, in teaching their daughters the duties of domeſtic life, and in inſtilling into their tender minds the principles of piety and virtue. Beneath a mother's eye, the young females were then ſent to certain places of inſtruction, called Day-ſchools, accompanied by their brothers; a practice which would inevitably lay the foundation of a degree of fra-

ternal affection, inconſiſtent with that ſort of reſerved and auſtere demeanour, which it is ſo proper for men to obſerve toward their female relatives. Nor was this the only bad conſequence reſulting from the practice of ſending boys and girls to the ſame School. In the pure hearts of the little innocents, attachments were often formed; which, in the minds of the young females, excited ſuch a wiſh to excel, in order to render themſelves amiable in the eyes of their little friends, as was altogether incompatible with the preſervation of ignorance. Nor did the evil ſtop here; being habituated to conſider their young ſchool-fellows in the light of brothers, they had none of that reſtraint, which, before company, ſeals the lips of the Boarding-ſchool Bibbys, but behaved with the frankneſs that is natural to the pure in heart. By early diſcipline, their minds received ſuch an odious degree of firmneſs, as often enabled them to ſuſtain, with dignity, the

moſt bitter derees of adverſe fortune, and their bodies acquired ſuch a repulſive degree of health, as rendered them equal to the diſcharge of every active duty. All theſe multifarious evils are now no longer to be apprehended: the ſyſtem of their ſouthern neighbours, is now, I am well aſſured, practiſed with ſo much ſucceſs, that the daughter of a *mountain Rajah*, will ſoon be as amiably frivolous, as engagingly ignorant; as weak in body, and in mind, as the pupil of the greateſt Boarding School in London.

There are other inſtances in which theſe females of England, whom the infatuated Rajah has repreſented to himſelf 'as exalted in the ſcale of being to the rank of rational, as capable of receiving the pure principles of virtue, and of ſteadily performing the various and complicated duties of life,' are treated in a manner, at which the ſoul of humanity revolts. Thouſands,

and ten thouſands, of theſe Chriſtian women, being yearly ſuffered to periſh in the ſtreets of their great metropolis, under the accumulated miſery of want, diſeaſe, and infamy!

We now think with horror, of the blood-ſtained altars of the ancient groves, where, to appeaſe the wrath of the black Goddeſs *, it was permitted that human victims ſhould be immolated: we paint to ourſelves the agonizing feelings of the parent, when the blooming virgin was led

* Callee, or the Black Goddeſs, is exhibited in the Indian temples with a collar compoſed of golden ſkulls, as deſcriptive of the dreadful ſacrifices in which ſhe took delight. The timid, and benign, character of the Hindoos, has induced many to doubt in the poſſibility of theſe horrid rites having ever been practiſed in India; but the proofs that are given in many of the Shanſcrit writings, of human ſacrifices offered, in remote ages, to this truly infernal deity, ſeem too ſtrong to be refuted.

forth, preſenting a ſpotleſs offering to the ſacrificial knife; and, ſickening at the thought, we give praiſe to the adored Veeſhnû, at whoſe commands theſe horrid rites were terminated. But callous, and unfeeling Engliſhmen! they endure to behold with their own eyes, ſacrifices in one year exceeding in number, all that, in the courſe of revolving years, periſhed on the altars of Aſia! ſacrificed, not immolated to appeaſe the wrath of their infernal Dewtahs, but victims of the licentious paſſions of unprincipled men! and yet many of theſe men are ſo abſurd as to pretend to ſenſibility: nay, ſo much is their conduct at war with their profeſſions, that I have heard them declaim, with apparent horror, againſt the holy ceremony of the virtuous widow, throwing herſelf upon the funeral pile of her deceaſed Lord. Yes, I have ſeen thoſe, who could witneſs the ſcene of miſery exhibited in their own ſtreets, without betraying one ſymptom of compaſſion,

affect to ſhed tears of pity, at the deſcription of a Hindoo female's voluntary ſacrifice, by which ſhe attained glory here, and had the certainty of happineſs hereafter! Is it thus, by a pretended feeling for imaginary ſorrows, that the Chriſtian Shaſter teaches men to exerciſe their benevolence? Is it in conformity to any part of *its* precepts, that they can ſo freely grieve at equivocal and diſtant evils, while thoſe, which are before their eyes, excite neither compaſſion nor remorſe?

However unfeeling others might be to the miſery of the wretched females, one would think that the voice of nature in a father's breaſt would cry aloud, to ſave his offspring from a fate ſo dreadful; but, deaf to her pleadings, parents themſelves do not heſitate to devote the unhappy victims, by means of an education which conducts them ſtep by ſtep from vanity to vice, reconciling themſelves to all its direful conſe-

quences, by a repetition of the cabaliſtic word GENTEEL, which has ſuch a magical charm, as to change, in their opinion, the very nature of every ſpecies of madneſs, vice and folly!

Can a mind, pure and intelligent as that of Zaarmilla, delight to dwell with ſuch a people? Is it from ſuch a polluted ſtream that the deſcendant of a thouſand Rajahs would wiſh to imbibe knowledge? Fooliſh project! Perverted ambition! How many choice morſels of Shanſcrit literature lie mouldering in the temples of Benares, which he may reſcue from the ravages of devouring worms, and be repaid with the words of wiſdom. Hath the ſhallow invention of Europeans conceived any work equal to the Mahhabarat? Can the aphoriſms of their philoſophers be compared with the Heetopades of Veeſhnoo Sarma? or the imagination of their poets vie in lofty imagery, or ſublime expreſſion, with

the beautiful dramas of the immortal Calidas? Doth the wiſdom-loving Rajah delight to tread the maze of logic? Let him ſeek for gratification in the Perſian writings of the Muſſulmans, which, though ſcarcely lawful for a Hindoo to peruſe, are yet to be preferred to the abſurd writings of Chriſtian philoſophers.

Which of the lawyers of Europe has ſhewn himſelf more expert in involving the ſimplicity of truth in the deep mazes of perplexity, than the Imaum Aboo Yooſeff, and the more illuſtrious philoſopher Ib'n Edreſs al Shaffie *? What king of Europe could ever boaſt of a Miniſter equal to that Golden Pillar who ſupported the throne of the renowned Ackber? Or who, in modern times, can, among them, be compared with the Great Eradut Khan

* See Preliminary Diſcourſe to the Hedaya.

Waſeh? The memoirs, written by that Nobleman, is a gem of ſuch tranſcendent worth and luſtre, that its imitation as far exceeds the abilities of the puny Nobles of Europe, as does the unſhaken fidelity and magnanimous heroiſm of the illuſtrious writer. In truth, there was no point in which I was more diſappointed, than in the ſtate of learning in England. By multitudes of the people of that country, the name of Abul Fazel has never been heard! I converſed with many, to whom the renown of Veias was unknown, and can with truth aver, that numbers, who have the character of *learned*, are yet ſo very ignorant, as not to know whether the great city of Canouge was founded by a Hindoo or a Muſſulman!

With regard to the political ſtate of Great Britain, its laws, and form of government, I am not qualified to ſpeak with certainty; never having been able to find

any two people of the ſame opinion with reſpect to any of theſe points. One circumſtance alone appeared to be irrefragably eſtabliſhed; and this is a circumſtance ſo extraordinany, that it deſerves attention.

Know, then, that the Viſier, or firſt Miniſter, to the king of Great Britain, is, at all times, the weakeſt, and moſt wicked man in the kingdom, and that there is not a man in England, however incapable of managing, with propriety, the ſimpleſt concerns of private life, who is not much better qualified, than the Miniſter, to conduct the complex and extenſive buſineſs of a great nation? You may, perhaps, be inclined to doubt the truth of this aſſertion; but when I inform you, that I repeat it not from vague report, but from the reiterated and ſolemn aſſeverations of the people I have alluded to, the point will appear incontrovertibly eſtabliſhed.

I herewith ſend, for the gratification of your curioſity, a ſpecimen of the painted idols of the Europeans, the examination of which has lately employed much of my time. A rich field of conjecture is already opened, to the culture of which I ſhall willingly devote ſome of the remaining years of my exiſtence. That the origin of the rites of theſe divinities may be traced to the favoured country of Brahma, will not admit of a doubt. The flower, which one of the Goddeſſes carries in her hand, bears ſuch a ſtriking reſemblance to the Lotos, that, at firſt ſight, any impartial perſon muſt recogniſe the adored figure of the bounteous Ganga. If any one of the figures has any claim to European origin, it is that of *Knave*; but who ever heard of a *King of hearts* in the hiſtory of any nation of Europe? In the courſe of a few years inveſtigation, I do not deſpair to prove the real family of every one of theſe paint-

ed idols; and in the profecution of this laborious work, I ſhall not diſdain to imitate the method purſued by the antiquarians of England, for 'wiſe men will not diſdain to learn, even from the counſel of fools.' I recommend thee to the protection of Veeſhnû, and the favour of all the inferior Gods.

What can I ſay more?

LETTER VI.

Third Letter of the Bramin.

BEFORE the delivery of my letter into the hands of the Dank *, I reſolved to re-examine the counſellors of memory, leſt any circumſtance, that would have influence to enlighten the mind of the noble Rajah, ſhould, unfortunately, have been omitted. It was a happy precaution! By it I am enabled to add to the proofs I have already given of the Braminical origin of the Engliſh nation, one other proof, which eſtabliſhes the opinion of the Pundit, beyond the reach of human controverſy.

* Meſſenger.

Let it be known then to the friend of Maandaara, that the performance of the ceremony of the Purekah * is known to the Chriſtian, and ſo much is the practice of its myſterious rites encouraged, that the moſt trifling and inſignificant diſputes are frequently referred to its deciſion: as, for example; in ſpeaking of the colour of the eyes of a dancing-girl, one man ſhould ſay that they were black, and another aver them to be blue, the common method of deciding the diſpute (either between *people of ſtyle*, or ſuch as pant for admiſſion into that honourable Caſt) is the performance of Purekah. The method of performing this ſublime ceremony, is not, it is true, exactly ſimilar, in all reſpects, to that which is ſo piouſly obſerved in India. A little conſideration on the genius of the people, and their deficiency in religious knowledge,

* Trial by Ordeal, ſtill practiced in Hindoſtan.

will, however, account for the difference. In England, I never heard that the performers of the Purekah took the precaution of preparing themſelves for the award of fate, by the obſervance of long and rigorous abſtinence: or that they were particularly aſſiduous in their arts of devotion; or that they bound themſelves by any oath before the Magiſtrate to abide by the infallible deciſion of the Gods. All theſe preparatory duties are, by theſe trifling people, altogether omitted, and the ceremony itſelf, inſtead of being performed in the preſence of the Magiſtrate, and the aſſembled people, is uſually gone through, under the immediate inſpection of only *two witneſſes* *. In the Purekah of the Engliſh, they neither thruſt their hands into veſſels filled with oboiling oil, nor do they ſay to the Balance, 'thou, O Balance, art

* For an account of the Indian Ordeal, in which all theſe methods are mentioned, ſee Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. ii.

the manſion of truth, thou waſt anciently contrived by Deities. If I am guilty, O, venerable as my own mother, ſink me down; but if innocent, raiſe me aloft in air.' Neither do they ſwallow poiſon, nor caſt an Idol into the water, nor take into their hands the red hot iron; nor make any uſe of the ſeven leaves of the trembling Pippel, or the ſeven blades of Dharba graſs, but by means of the diminutive *Agnee Aſtors*, called Piſtols, the two diſputants attempt to convey little leaden bullets into one another's bowels, or brains. In the opinion of ſome philoſophers, a worthleſs fellow will continue to be as much a worthleſs fellow after the performance of the Purekah as before; but in the opinions of the performers themſelves, it has efficacy to change the nature of guilt, and to waſh away the foulеſt ſpot of diſhonour.

What can I ſay more!

LETTER VII.

Seeta Juin Zāārmilla, *Rajah of Almora*; to Kiſheen Neaây Māāndāāra, *Zimeendar of Cumlore.*

I Bow with reverence to Ganeſa, and ſubmit the ardent ſtruggles of my ſoul to the decrees of friendſhip. The requeſt of Maandaara I am unable to reſiſt, even when his arguments are too feeble to make any impreſſion on my mind: though my reaſon is unconvinced, I am ſubdued by my tenderneſs; and ſhould conſider myſelf unworthy of the name of friend, could I perſiſt in tearing myſelf from my country at the moment that Maandaara is about to be reſtored to its boſom. Yes, my

friend! I have this moment received the delightful intelligence, that the Firman, which reſtores thee to thy Zimeendary, hath been iſſued! Thou mayeſt return in peace to the land of thy fathers! The Gods of Baandareſa ſhall be raiſed from their hiding places in the earth, to be placed upon the altars of his ſon: they ſhall ſee him perform the rites of hoſpitality: ſpread his feaſt for the poor, and afford ſhelter to the oppreſſed. The Daivers, who delight in beholding the reward of virtue, ſhall hover round your dwelling. Seraſwatee ſhall bleſs your hours of ſtudy, and the bees of Cama, diveſted of their ſtings, ſhall pay you the tribute of pure and genuine ſweetneſs.

I have prepared Zaamarcanda for receiving you as her huſband. Her mind is too gentle to require the harſh reſtraint of authority: let me, therefore, conjure you to treat her with tenderneſs; and you

will be repaid by that willing obedience, which is the offspring of affection, in a docile, and ingenuous mind. For my ſhare, I declare to you, that while I accept, with pleaſure, of your ſiſter for my wife, I, at the ſame time, muſt inform you of my intention of acting in direct oppoſition to your advice. From me ſhe ſhall receive every indulgence. If ſhe has any underſtanding, I will take pleaſure in improving it: nor ſhall I dread any conſequences that can ariſe from doing ſo. The more I meditate, the more am I convinced, that to tread firmly in the path of virtue it is neceſſary that we ſhould be ſupported by the ſtaff of knowledge. Ignorance is the mother of many follies.

It is with grief that I behold a mind, great and noble as that of my friend's, darkened by the clouds of prejudice. Had you, with me, paid homage to Seraſwatee, the ſoul-enlightening Goddeſs would have

inſpired you with ideas more worthy of yourſelf: you would not then have attributed a deſire to enlarge the ſphere of knowledge, and an ardent admiration of excellence, wherever found, to the influence of magical ſpells, or incantation.

There is a period, beyond which, if the human mind remains bound in the chains of ignorance, it loſes the power of expanſion; and conſiders the exiſtence of it in others, as the dream of illuſive imagination.

He, who looſed the fetters of my underſtanding, who convinced me, by the cultivated ſtate of his own, how high the minds of mortals might ſoar—the enlightened Percy—taught me to obſerve, that the negative ignorance, in which the mind is immerſed, when excluded from commerce with the world, is of a nature far leſs obdurate, than that which has been

rivetted by Pride in the boſom of ſociety. Such is the ignorance of Sheermaal. His mind was too much narrowed, by its own prejudices, to receive a fair impreſſion from new images. The few ideas which had been put into it, by his firſt teacher, had been received without examination, but retained with the pertinacity of unyielding pride.

Can *he* be a proper judge of the peculiar cuſtoms of remote nations, who meaſures every thing by the narrow ſtandard of his own prejudices? Can *he*, who, inſtead of making obſervations on the variety of human character, pronounces ſentence of condemnation on whatever he does not underſtand; can *he* be qualified for communicating information to others? No. Falſe, and fooliſh, will ever be the concluſions of preſumptuous ignorance!

Ah! what a pattern might Sheermaal have found in the travellers, and the travel-writers of Europe. How many of theſe does England alone, every year, pour from her maternal boſom? Happy for Sheermaal, if he had followed the laudable example of theſe ſapient youths; how deep would then have been his obſervations! how important his diſcoveries!

I am unwilling to ſpeak with diſreſpect of a Bramin, I view the ignorance of this man with pity, and ſhould only give to his *prejudice*, the ſmile of contempt, but I cannot perceive his malice, and his falſehood, without feelings of abhorrence and indignation. Is it for a mind, baſe and ignoble as his, to accuſe the ingenuous, and enlightened, Percy of falſehood?

O that Maandaara could have known that incomparable youth! That he could

have liſtened to his inſtructions, while every word he uttered, was like the vivid flaſh of lightening, illuminating the dark expance of night. He would then have been convinced, that a mind, like his, was incapable of ſwerving from the rigid dictates of truth; and he would have united with me, in reprobating every attempt to calumniate his memory. Dear ſhall his memory be to Zaarmilla, while the blood of life flows through his veins, and whoever would ſhun my reſentment, muſt be careful how they ſuffer the ſhadow of diſreſpect to paſs over the name of my departed friend!

I HAVE juſt received the two concluding letters of that ignorant, and deluded Brahmin; who has inſtilled his baſe prejudices

into the mind of my friend. Surely ſome malignant Dewtah, muſt have blinded the eyes, and fettered the underſtanding, of this unhappy man; who could not, otherwiſe, have been ſo groſsly deceived.—What! during his ten years abode among Chriſtians, never to have heard of, or ſeen, the Chriſtian Shaſter! That Shaſter, the moſt abſtruſe, and difficult doctrines of which, are ſo carefully inculcated into the tender minds of youth, that every boy, who is ſent to the Univerſity, is ſo perfectly maſter of the ſubject, as to be able to give his ſolemn aſſent to the unerring explanations of his Church. That Shaſter, of which the precepts of Peace, Charity, Humility, and univerſal Benevolence, form the baſis of every law, and direct the practice of every Chriſtian court! That Shaſter I have ſtudied with the ſtricteſt attention, and do ſolemnly aſſure you, that the virtues I have enumerated, are as ſtrictly enjoined to the Chriſtians, as the

performance of Poojah to the Hindoo, or the Faſt of Ramozin to the Muſſulman. The Muſſulman faſts, and the Hindoo performs Poojah, according to their repective laws, and can we believe that the Chriſtian alone treats with contempt the authority of his God?

How could the lie-loving Bramin expect to be credited, when he aſſerts, that Chriſtians enter into the traffic of blood! That theſe men, who walk by the rule of 'doing to others, as they would be done by in the like caſe,' invade the countries of the defenceleſs, and ſeizing, with tiger-like ferocity, their unoffending children, bind them in the galling chains of ſlavery, and devote them, as a cruel ſacrifice, to the black Goddeſs of affliction! Surely, ſuch a repreſentation cannot fail to appear in its true light to every one, who knows the jealouſy entertained, by the ſublime Governors of that enlightened nation, for

the purity of their honour! ſo great, that even thoſe Chiefs, whom we have conſidered as bulwarks, raiſed by the immortal Veeſhnu, to protect us from the deſtroyer, have fallen ſhort of the ſtandard of perfection erected in the immaculate boſoms of their brethren at home! Can ſuch men be ſuppoſed to ſanction the traffic of human miſery? Ah! how little doth he know of the undeviating rectitude of the Britiſh Senate!

Indeed, all that he ſays upon the religious rites, practiſed by the Engliſh nation, is equally falſe, and abſurd. There is no ſuch thing as any Poojah performed to bits of painted paper: neither are partridges held ſacred. From examining their Shaſter, with the ſtricteſt accuracy, I am prepared to aſſert, that it contains not one word which could countenance ſuch idolatry. And, whether it is likely, that any practices, not warranted by its

authority, would be ſuffered to become prevalent, I ſhall leave you to judge; after informing you, that, in England, no man is deemed qualified for holding even the meaneſt employment in the ſtate, but by the performance of an act of the moſt ſolemn devotion. An act which is only ſafe to the pious, and the pure; and of which, to participate unworthily, is declared to be a heinous ſin! Ah! how pure muſt be the morals of ſuch a people!

As to what he ſays of the frivolous education beſtowed upon Chriſtian women, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that it is utterly inconſiſtent with the belief of the immortality and progreſſive improvement of the human ſoul; it is, indeed, too abſurd to ſtand in need of confutation. When he can convince me, that the men are vain, voluptuous, ſelfiſh, and unjuſt, then ſhall I believe, that the women are frivolous, and ignorant.

In regard to what he aſſerts of the different Caſts, into which the people are divided, I am not ſo well prepared to anſwer him. I only know, that nothing like it appears in the Chriſtian Shaſter. The *people of family*, and the *people of no family*, are there put upon a level; and, at the time it was written, it is evident *the people of ſtyle* had never been heard of.

Oh! that it had been permitted me to have confuted the miſrepreſentations of this wicked Bramin, by the unerring anſwers of *experience*, that I could have followed the impulſe of my own deſires, in the glorious purſuit of wiſdom; and traced the obſcure and diſtant path, by which Knowledge diſſeminated her treaſures over the various regions of the earth! Ah! didſt thou know what it has coſt me to relinquiſh this favourite purſuit; what ſelf-denial I have been obliged to exert,

ere I could turn mine eyes from the enchanting proſpect that opened to my view, thou wouldſt eſteem this act of friendſhip more, than if I had poured into thy lap the accumulated treaſures of my fathers!

Having once determined, thou needſt not fear that ought ſhall have power to ſhake my reſolution. I ſwear to thee, by the name of my father, *that while Prymaveda lives, Zaarmilla will never forſake her.*

I ſhall be at Rampore in the ſpace of a fortnight: there I ſhall give, to the arms of my friend, the lovely and gentle Zamarcanda; and receive thy ſiſter for the partner of my boſom. After the performance of our nuptials, I ſhall have the pleaſure of conducting you to the ancient ſeat of your fore-fathers. You will be received with joy, by all the Ryots, and welcomed by every ſurrounding Zimeendar, with the

ſincereſt ſatisfaction. You muſt, after this, return with me to Almora; and there, where every ſcene recals to memory the days of early felicity, we ſhall renew the ſtudies, and retaſte the pleaſures of our youth. We ſhall mingle our tears of gratitude, at the tomb of the venerable Pundit, who firſt poured the balm of inſtruction into our young and tender minds.

In the fair boſom of creation, and in the gorgeouſly enamelled vault of heaven, we ſhall together read thoſe divine myſteries, over which, the wiſdom of our holy Bramins has thrown a veil, that is impenetrable only to ignorance *. From theſe we will riſe to the contemplation of that

* This expreſſion ſeems favourable to the opinion entertained by ſome of our own writers, that great part of the Mythology of the Hindoos, is nothing more than enigmatical repreſentations of aſtronomical facts.

Omniſcient Spirit, whoſe all-ruling pow'r
Bids from each ſenſe bright emanations beam;
Glows in the rainbow, ſparkles in the ſtream,
Smiles in the bud, and gliſtens in the flow'r
That crowns each vernal bow'r;
Sighs in the gale, and warbles in the throat
Of every bird, that hails the blooming ſpring,
Or tells his love in many a liquid note,
While envious artiſts touch the rival ſtring,
Till rocks and foreſts ring;
Breathes in rich fragrance from the ſandal grove,
Or where the precious muſk-deer playful rove:
In dulcet juice from cluſt'ring fruit diſtils,
And burns ſalubrious in the taſteful clove *:

May the ſovereign Maya †, preſent to the mind of Maandaara, an ever varying

* See the ſixth ſtanza of the Hymn to Narayena, as tranſlated by Sir William Jones.

† 'It will be ſufficient here to premiſe, that the inextricable difficulties attending the vulgar notion of *material ſubſtances*, induced many of the wiſeſt Hindoos

aſſemblage of fair ideas! but may that which is deareſt to his heart, be the friendſhip of Zaarmilla!

What can I ſay more!

" to believe that the whole creation was rather an *energy* than a *work*, by which the Infinite Being, who is preſent at all times, in all places, exhibits to the minds of his creatures *a ſet of perceptions* like a wonderful picture or piece of muſic, always varied, yet always uniform: ſo that all bodies, and their qualities, exiſt, indeed, to every wiſe, and uſeful purpoſe: but exiſt only as far as they are *perceived*. This *Illuſive Operation* of the Deity, the Hindoo philoſophers, call *Maya*, or *Deception*." See the Argument to the above mentioned Hymn.

[In the correſpondence of the Rajah, we here find a chaſm of ſeveral years. Though none of the letters bear any date, we have, from circumſtances mentioned in the preceding ones, concluded them to have been written toward the beginning of the year 1775. Thoſe, which follow, we preſume, could not have been written before the year 1779, or 1780.]

LETTER VIII.

From the Rajah Zāārmilla, *to* Māāndāāra.

(Written from Barellee.)

MAY the powerful Eendra be ever propitious to the moſt benignant of friends; and the Goddeſs Sree preſerve his heart from the arrows of affliction!

An opportunity offers, of which I am not ſlow to avail myſelf, of ſending thee information of my health and ſafety. Had not ſorrow ſpread its raven wing over the beauties of every proſpect, my journey might have been delightful. But, alas! to him, whoſe heart is oppreſſed by recent calamity, the face of nature is veiled

in darkneſs. My perſon was ſoon at a diſtance from the ſcene of ſorrow, but from it I could not, by diſtance, diſengage my mind. Prymaveda! my affectionate, and faithful Prymaveda, expiring in my arms, was the picture that every where preſented itſelf to my eyes. Her laſt low, and feeble, ſighs, were ſtill the only ſounds which vibrated upon my ears. Change of ſcene afforded no alleviation to my grief, and Time, whoſe tongue of fire devoureth all things, appeared to move with too ſlow a pace to leave me room to hope much from his aſſiſtance. One only ſource of conſolation preſented itſelf to my deeply wounded mind, it was the reflection of having contributed to the happineſs of her, whoſe image dwells in my heart. Had I ever reproved with harſhneſs, or indulged my pride in the moroſe exerciſe of authority, how inſupportable would be the bitterneſs of my affliction?

Let not Maandaara reproach his friend for indulging in theſe melancholy reflections. The woman, who is attached to her huſband, will follow the ſpirit of her departed Lord, even though condemned to the regions of puniſhment; and ſhall my ſoul forget her, who waiteth for me in the realms of death? She, from whom ſprung my final deliverer*! She, who was the companion of my days, the friend of

* Alluding to the ceremony of the Sradh, which the Hindoos believe it neceſſary ſhould be performed by a man's own ſon, in order to facilitate his entrance to the regions of felicity; it is, therefore, by them eſteemed a great misfortune to die childleſs. In the drama of Sacontala, Duſhmanta thus laments his fate, 'Ah me! the departed ſouls of my anceſtors, who claim a ſhare in the funeral cake, which I have no ſon to offer, are apprehenſive of loſing their due honour.—My forefathers muſt drink, inſtead of a pure libation, this flood of tears, the only offering which a man, who dies childleſs, can make.' See Sac. Page 125.

my heart, whoſe gentle manners, and prudent counſels, ſmoothed the rugged path of life, and gave value to every bleſſing. But, alas! the innocent vivacity, the endearing tenderneſs, which, but yeſterday, were the delight of my life, are now recalled, but to aggravate my ſorrow. But why ſhould I, with the dart that rankles in my own boſom, wound the breaſt of my friend? Let me try to change the ſubject.

At Biſſoolee, I was received, by my kinſman, with every mark of kindneſs. He endeavoured to divert my mind, from the ſubject of its own griefs, by turning my attention to thoſe great tranſactions, of which this country had lately been the ſcene.

The firſt information that is given us upon any ſubject, that is in its nature intereſting, and which is beyond the reach of

our own inſpection, is ſo greedily received, that the judgment we form upon it is equally prompt and deciſive. I have frequently obſerved that ſuch haſty judgment, is upon more full inveſtigation, found erroneous; and here I had ample proof of the juſtice of the obſervation.

When the fall of the Afgan Cawns had taken place, we rejoiced to hear that this beautiful, and fertile, province, was to be put under the adminiſtration of Bêâſs Râye *; that pious Hindoo, who had ſhed ſo many tears over the misfortunes of his country. We imagined that he, who could paint the extortions, and oppreſſions of the Afgans, in ſuch true, and lively colours, muſt neceſſarily be poſſeſſed of a good, and feeling heart. Alas! the art of deſcribing human miſery, and the virtue of feeling for it, are too very different things.

* See the Rohilla Hiſtory.

This man, who declaimed ſo eloquently againſt the rapacity of the Afgans, had a heart *ſo ſteeled* by avarice, as to be impervious to every ſentiment of humanity. The country groaned beneath his oppreſſions, and his removal was conſidered as a deliverance from the peſtilence.

After having ſpent a week at Biſſoolee, I took leave of my kind, but too officious, kinſman, and proceeded to Barellee. The approach to this city, through lofty rows of bamboos, which form a continued arbour, ſurrounded on every ſide by gardens, flouriſhing in all the pride of beauty, extorted my admiration.

I did not fail to viſit the tomb of the renowned Afgan, who was ſo long the terror, and the glory of Kuttaher *. I

* Hafiz Rhamut, a Rohilla chief, celebrated for his warlike talents and unprincipled ambition; by

choſe to viſit it alone. There are moments, when the ſoul, abſorbed in its own reflections, feels an elevation which is incompatible with any ſociety.

The ſun had juſt hid the ſplendour of his beams behind the hills of Biſſoolee, and night begun to ſpread her duſky curtain over the face of nature, when I approached the ſilent ſcene, where the tomb of the warrior was reared. Of that ambition,

betraying the truſt of his friend, and uſurping the inheritance of his wards, he put himſelf at the head of the Rohilla government; and was killed at the battle of Cutterah, 22d of April 1774. By thoſe who ought to have known better, Hafiz Rhamut has been confounded with *Hafiz*, the celebrated poet of Shiraz, who flouriſhed above four hundred years ago. On conſulting the Parliamentary Regiſter, we find Hafiz Rhamut, who was neither a poet, nor a man of letters, introduced as '*famous throughout the Eaſt, for the elegance of his literature, and the ſpirit of his poetical compoſitions.*' Parliamentary Regiſter, No. 76, Page 205.

before the impetuous career of which the bars of gratitude, and of juſtice, had been annihilated; that ambition, inſatiable as the ocean, and extenſive as the firmament of heaven, what were now the limits? Small was the ſpot which contained the mouldering remains of him, who had ſtruck the Princes of the earth with terror. I liſtened—but the thunder of his voice was no longer to be heard. I looked—but the crowds of flatterers, who were wont to pay adulatory homage to his ſmiles, were no longer to be ſeen. The world, which had beheld the Afgan greatneſs ariſe, like a meteor from the womb of obſcurity, which had been dazzled by the brightneſs of its ſplendour, and aſtoniſhed by the celerity of its progreſs, beheld, without regret, its utter extinction in this narrow tomb. I indulged in theſe reveries the greater part of the night. The remainder of my time, at Barellee, was ſpent in making enquiries concerning the

remarkable events which have taken place in its vicinity. The difficulty of obtaining information was greater than I was aware of. Every one, whom I applied to for that purpoſe, I found to be ſo brimful of that part of the ſtory which particularly related to himſelf, that I was obliged to liſten to a volume of unintereſting anecdotes, before I could arrive at the truth.

The ravages committed by the troops of his Highneſs, after the battle of Cutterah *, were ſuch as have been conſtantly practiſed, by every victorious army; but the contraſt, exhibited in the behaviour of the Engliſh, was altogether new and uncommon: ſuch as no Muſſulman army has ever been known to practiſe; and ſuch as, I greatly fear, they will never be induced to imitate.

* See Rohilla Hiſtory.

After having, by their courage and ſuperior ſkill, decided the event of the day, while thoſe for whom they fought, ruſhed upon the ſpoil of the defeated enemy, and, in their avidity for plunder, were alike regardleſs of the remonſtrances of juſtice, and the dictates of humanity, the gallant army of the Engliſh, ſatisfied with the glory of victory, diſdained all other ſpoil. They beheld, with indignation and horror, the behaviour of their allies, and exerted themſelves for the protection, and relief, of the unhappy ſufferers, whom the ſucceſsful foe had left deſtitute of every other reſource.

All that I have heard in this place, rekindles in my boſom the deſire ſo long cheriſhed, and ſo unwillingly ſuppreſſed, of becoming more intimately acquainted with a people, who have ever been the objects of my affectionate veneration. My

reſolution is taken; and, in purſuance of it, as ſoon as I have performed the act of pious ablution in the ſacred ſpot, where the two wandering bleſſings of Hindoſtan unite their waves, I ſhall proceed to the Engliſh camp. In liſtening to the inſtructive converſation of theſe enlightened men, the ſelfiſh ſorrows, which at preſent occupy my heart, may, for a time, be ſoothed into forgetfulneſs. I ſhall, perhaps, renew my acquaintance with the friends of Percy. I ſhall, with them, have the pleaſure of recapitulating the virtues of that amiable youth: thoſe virtues, whoſe fragrance perfumed my ſoul, and left an impreſſion, ſtrong as the incenſe from the aromatic plant, which time has not the power to obliterate.

Preſent Zamarcanda with the affectionate remembrances of her brother. I would recommend my ſon to her affection, did I not know that her goodneſs will anticipate

my wiſhes. To you my friend, and to her, I truſt the precious depoſit—the life of my life! And to Camdhaynû my ſoul is expanded in prayers for your happineſs!

LETTER VIII.

The SAME, *to the* SAME.

FROM the King of worſhipped places *, the renowned Allahabad, to the moſt

* The Engliſh reader will find ſome light thrown upon the ſubject of this letter, by conſulting Mr. Maurice's Indian Antiquities, who having traced the progreſs of the Ganges, from the Mountains of Thibet to the plains of Hindoſtan, thus proceeds: 'Then flowing on through delightful plains, and diffuſing riches, and verdure, in its progreſs at Allahabad, receives a rich tribute of its ſtream in the waters of the Jumna. If we may believe the Bramins, another ſacred river, called the Serraſwatty, joins theſe rivers under ground; and, therefore, this ſpot, conſecrated by the threefold junction of their waves, has

faithful of friends, Zaarmilla ſends health, and proſperity. While the divine influence of the ſacred ſtream, into which I have ſo lately plunged, continues to refreſh my ſoul, I haſten to impart to thee the ſentiments which have inſpired my heart. But how ſhall I deſcribe to you the tranſport with which I beheld the ſacred ſpot, celebrated through all ages! that ſpot, conſecrated by the threefold junction of the ſacred Ganges, the health-giving Jumna, and the unſeen, but not leſs benignant, Serraſwattee! I contemplated, with elevated rapture, the junction of thoſe honoured ſtreams, which here mingling their ſacred waves, diffuſe the exhauſtleſs treaſures of fertility, and verdure, over the moſt favoured of regions. From theſe bleſſed emblems of the myſtic union of the divi-

ever been the reſort of devout pilgrims, from every province of Hindoſtan, and is denominated in the Ayeen Aikbery—*The King of worſhipped places.*' Maurice's Indian Antiquities, vol. i, page 155.

nities, my ſoul, wrapt in gratitude, aſcended to the Almighty Creating Power, the grandeur of whoſe works is only to be equalled by his beneficence.

In the leſſons of the venerable Pundit, who was our firſt inſtructor, and in the ſublime writings of the great luminaries of the world, we have been taught to lift our hearts to Him, who alone, is infinite in power, and goodneſs! But, alas! the minds of all the Bramins, I have met with here, are completely engroſſed by the multiplied ſymbols of his attributes. From their company, I have received no pleaſure; from their converſation, I have reaped no inſtruction. I ſhall, therefore, haſten the period of my departure, and, probably, finiſh this letter from Benares.

FROM the Queen of Science, the favoured ſeat of learning, the celebrated Benares, Zaarmilla again addreſſes his friend.

Before I ſay any thing of a place of which you have already heard ſo much, I ſhall proceed to inform you of my viſit to the Engliſh officers, in the garriſon of Chunar.

As I ſtopt to take ſome refreſhment, at the diſtance of a few coſs from the fort, I was informed, by my people, that ſome Engliſh officers, who had been out on a hunting party, were, at that very time, in the ſame village. I ſent to inform them of my intention of viſiting Chunar; and, in a few minutes, I was no leſs delighted, than ſurpriſed, to ſee Doctor Denbeigh

enter the veranda, where I was then repoſing myſelf. He ſaluted me with that glow of kindneſs which is excited in the boſoms of the benevolent, by an unexpected interview between thoſe whom the hand of time ſeemed to have ſeparated for ever. He introduced me to his companions, the urbanity of whoſe manners formed a ſtriking contraſt to the plainneſs of their dreſs.

On my arrival at Chunar, I found myſelf as if I had been all at once tranſported into a new world. Surrounded by the Engliſh Chiefs, whoſe dreſs, whoſe language, and whoſe manners, were all ſo different from what I had ever been accuſtomed to, I could ſcarcely perſuade myſelf that I did not wander in the realms of deluſion.

At firſt, all Engliſhmen appeared to me to wear the ſame aſpect, and to have

the ſame manners. But when wonder had ſufficiently ſubſided, to admit of the calm accuracy of obſervation, I perceived that every countenance had a characteriſtic diſtinction; a diſtinction, which extended to the tones of the voice, and geſtures of the body. This variety, like the Ráginís which preſide over muſic *, ſerved but to render harmony more pleaſing. The ſenior Officers ſmiled at the playful vivacity of their youthful friends, who frequently ventured to exert their wit in a manner that could not have failed to excite reſentment in leſs amiable minds. The time of each was ſpent according to his own taſte. By ſome, it was employed in the purſuit of literature; and I am certain it muſt ex-

* The Râginís, or female paſſions, are the Nymphs, which, according to the beautiful Allegory of the Hindoos, preſide over muſical ſounds. A tranſlation of ſome of the many Diſſertations upon this ſubject, which are to be found in the Shanſcrit language, is much to be wiſhed for.

alt my new friends in the eſtimation of Maandaara, when he is informed, that to the knowledge of the Perſian, many of the Engliſh Chiefs add a conſiderable degree of information in the Shanſcrit language. The time of vacation from immediate ſervice, waſted by the Muſſulman Commanders in voluptuous indolence, is ſpent by theſe more enlightened men, in ſtudies which add to their ſtock of knowledge, and do honour to the genius of their country. It is by theſe ſtrangers that the annals of Hindoſtan, which her barbarian conquerors have ſought to obliterate in the blood of her children, ſhall be reſtored! Already, have Temples, Palaces, and Cities, which Calli * had covered with the mantle of oblivion, been, by the indefatigable reſearches of theſe favourites of Serraſwattee, dragged to light.

* Calli, here ſignifies Time.

The Pagodas, whoſe lofty ſummits had ſuſtained the clouds, and palaces, which had once ſpread their golden fronts to the ſun, proud of being the reſidence of the ancient Rajahs of our nation, now bow their time-worn heads to liſten to the voice of ſtrangers, and behold the ſacred characters, inſcribed upon their boſoms, familiarly peruſed by a people, whoſe nation had not ſprung into exiſtence at the time theſe towering monuments of Eaſtern ſplendour had commenced the progreſs of decay!

I found great difficulty in tearing myſelf from the ſociety of theſe gentlemen, from whom I experienced every mark of kindneſs, and attention: the pain of parting was, however, in ſome degree alleviated by the promiſe made to me, by two of theſe Saibs, to rejoin me at Benares.

I embarked, for the firſt time, on the mighty Ganges, and, turning my eyes to take leave of the ſeat of hoſpitality, I was ſtruck with the appearance of the citadel, which ſeems to have ariſen from the bed of Ganga; the piety of our fathers is ſtill legible on the walls of this maſſy pile; nor has the guardian Dewtah forſaken her ſacred charge. The ſeat of her reſidence remains entire. And though the refreſhing breeze of morn wafts her to the ſeat of Science, ſhe fails not to return to Chunar, before the ſultry heats of noon *.

* The Fort of Chunar is ſaid to be of the higheſt antiquity. In the citadel is a black marble ſlab, on which the tutelary Deity of the place is traditionally ſuppoſed, at all times, to be ſeated; except from ſunriſe until nine o'clock in the morning; when he is ſuppoſed to be at Benares: during which time, from the ſuperſtition of the Hindoos, attacks may be made upon the fort with a proſpect of ſucceſs. See Hodges' Travels in India, page 56.

We gently floated down the unruffled boſom of the Queen of Rivers, which expands itſelf on approaching Benares, and puts on an additional air of grandeur, in honour, it would ſeem, of this celebrated city. The city appears to have returned the compliment, and to have ſelected its choiceſt ornaments to deck the banks of its beneficent viſitor. Numerous and beautiful are the Pagodas, all enriched by the piety, and adorned by the ingenuity of our anceſtors; which ſee themſelves reflected in the mighty ſtream. Some, in mouldering ruins, tell of the injuries they have ſuſtained, not only from the inſidious hand of Time, but from the ruthleſs bigotry of the deſtroying foe. Innumerable Ghauts *, ſome of which are highly decorated, and embankments, which exhibit all the ſplendour and elegance of architecture, give ad-

* Flights of ſteps leading up from the river.

ditional grace and beauty to this moſt enchanting ſcene.

My reception from the Rajah was extremely flattering. You will, no doubt, be anxious for my opinion of this man, who now fills ſo exalted a ſtation.

There is no trial ſo dangerous to virtue, as proſperity; had the father of this young man continued to occupy the office of Dewan to the Aumeldar * of the province, ſo long filled by his grandfather, and he himſelf ſucceeded to the ſame advantageous, though ſubordinate employment, he

* Bulwart Sing, the father of Cheyt Sing, was the ſon of Monſerans, a Bramin, who had been appointed *ſteward* to Ruſhem Ally, then *governor* of the province of Benares; he ſupplanted his maſter, and obtained the province for himſelf: and this was the origin of a man, called, by ſome in this country, a ſovereign Prince! See Broomes' Elucidation of the Articles of Impeachment.

might, perhaps, have conducted himſelf with temper and diſcretion: but the height of his elevation has made him giddy; he wiſhes to quit the ſtaff which has hitherto ſupported him; and by the aſſiſtance of which he has climbed to his preſent greatneſs. If he ſucceeds, he will probably be made ſenſible of his folly, by the precipitancy of his fall.

You may imagine in what manner this young man is impoſed upon by his people, when I tell you, that they have actually made him believe that the preſent Governor General is not without enemies, even in the Supreme Council! Was ever any thing more abſurd, than to imagine that men, who could poſſibly have no other motive for viſiting theſe regions, than to promote their country's glory, and the happineſs of mankind, ſhould yet become enemies to him who has ſo eminently contributed to both? Ridiculous idea!

What is it but to imagine, that from the baſe motives of *perſonal enmity*, *envy of ſuperiour talents*, or *jealouſy of ſuperiour power*, theſe men would prefer the ruin of a rival, to the glory, and preſervation of an empire! How unworthy of the character of Engliſhmen!

I was much rejoiced at the arrival of my two Engliſh friends, whoſe chief motive for viſiting Benares at this time, was to inſpect and examine the aſtronomical apparatus ſtill extant in the Tower of the Stars. Both theſe gentlemen were deeply learned in this divine ſcience. The ſtupendous engines, conſtructed by the ingenuity of our anceſtors for meaſuring the expanſe of heaven, and tracing through its trackleſs arch the path of its illuſtrious inhabitants, filled their minds with aſtoniſhment. Alas! that theſe evidences of the wiſdom of our fathers ſhould now ſerve to mark the degeneracy of their children! That ſcience,

which exalts the ſoul to heaven, which enables it to peruſe that book of wiſdom, where the Supreme hath written his attributes in the moſt legible characters; even in the golden orbs, whoſe diſtant glories delight the eye of ignorance. That ſcience, ſo familiar to our fathers, is now almoſt loſt to their unenlightened ſons. But as the ſplendid luminary of the ſky, when, apparently extinguiſhed in darkneſs, continues ſtill to purſue his courſe, illuminating with his brightneſs the various inhabitants of the earth; ſo doth the Goddeſs of Science purſue her radiant journey: and when we vainly imagine ſhe is gone for ever, if we open the eyes of our underſtanding, we ſhall ſee her beaming with redoubled luſtre on the children of another hemiſphere. Theſe ſtrangers could, at one glance, comprehend the uſe of thoſe inſtruments, which the Pundits, who attended us, could not explain; and I ſoon found that the

knowledge imparted to us upon this ſubject, by our reverend teacher, was but ignorance, compared to their ſuperiour attainments. Need we farther proof that the ſpirit of Brahma is not confined to any particular region, but extendeth over his great creation?

In the conviction of this truth, I have determined to devote ſome months to the cultivation of a more intimate acquaintance with thoſe, who are ſo well qualified to impart the light of knowledge to my mind.

I have now fulfilled the purpoſe of my journey to Benares, but have no pleaſure in the thoughts of returning to Almora. Alas! wherefore ſhould I return? The lamp of love is extinguiſhed in my dwelling, and darkneſs reſts upon my pleaſant bowers. To my friend, and to my ſiſter, I can, with confidence, entruſt the only treaſure that intereſts my heart. Yes, Za-

marcanda, I know that thou wilt watch with a mother's care over the helpleſs infancy of my child. May the Gods of our nation reward thy tenderneſs!

What can I ſay more!

LETTER X.

From the SAME, *to the* SAME.

WHOSE happineſs, ſaith the wiſe inſtructor, 'is equal to that of the man who hath a friend to live with, a friend to converſe with, and a friend to embrace;' and ſuch happineſs it is now my deſtiny to enjoy. Behold me at Calcutta, under the ſame roof with the gentle Saib, who was the choice friend of the ever-lamented Percy!

Once more embarking on the boſom of the beneficent Ganga, I was conducted by the gentle Goddeſs to Patna, where

the firſt perſon that met my arrival was no other than Captain Grey himſelf. He inſtantly recognized me, and received me with the ſpontaneous glow of cordial affection. The few days that I remained there, were chiefly occupied in viewing that ancient city, which the reſidence of the Engliſh has recalled to the vigour of life. Nothing has more forcibly ſtruck my mind, in the whole courſe of my journey, than the amazing contraſt, in point of fertility and cultivation, between the territories of the Chriſtian, and Muſſulman Lords of Hindoſtan. In the Muſſulman diſtricts, we behold ruined villages, where, inſtead of the cheerful noiſe of the mechanic, or the mingled hum of light-hearted loquacity, univerſal ſilence reigns; nor, in ſome once populous diſtricts, does any human figure meet the eye, ſave that of ſome ſolitary Bramin, who, abſorbed in contemplation, forſakes the haunts of men.

The chief ſtations of the Engliſh, on the contrary, may eaſily be traced by the flouriſhing ſtate of the country, which ſurrounds them: there the peaſant throws the grain into the liberal boſom of the earth with cheerfulneſs; aſſured, that he ſhall reap the reward of his toil. Having paid his rent, he knows that the remainder will be his own; nor fears that it will be wreſted from him by the open violence of the ſpoiler, or ſeized by the hard hand of rapacious avarice. Even when the heavens withheld their fructifying diſtillations from the thirſty earth, and ghaſtly famine ſtalked through the provinces around, the benignant charity of the Engliſh Chiefs ſuſtained the lives of thouſands: and thouſands more would have been ſaved from periſhing, had their religious principles permitted them to accept the proffered bounty *.

* The Engliſh reader may, perhaps, object to the account of the Rajah, as being very different

The day after my arrival at Patna, Captain Grey received the agreeable news of his having been promoted, by the Gover-general, to a new appointment, which demanded his immediate attendance at Calcutta. It was with pleaſure that I accepted his obliging invitation to accompany him thither. Several of his friends agreed to be of the party. We proceeded in Budgerows, furniſhed with every accommodation that could add pleaſure to this delightful voyage.

As the channel of the river enlarged, my heart bounded within me at the expanſe of waters which ſurrounded me. 'Yet what is this ſtream, in all its majeſty,' exclaimed

from that tale of horrors, which has been ſo generally received. Which account comes neareſt to the truth, thoſe, who have been eye witneſſes of the ſcene deſcribed, can beſt determine.

I, 'in compariſon of that mighty ocean! that fathomleſs abyſs! which all theſe Europeans have already paſſed.' Such is the degree of knowledge to be acquired in retirement, compared to the attainments of thoſe, whoſe boſoms receive the waters of wiſdom, flowing through the thouſand channels of experience!

The novelty of the pictureſque, and beautiful ſcenery, that frequently preſented itſelf to our eyes, produced aſtoniſhment and delight; but the uncommon traits of character, which I obſerved in ſome of my companions, exhibited a novelty ſtill more intereſting. As an example, I ſhall only attempt to deſcribe to you a few of thoſe features, in the character of one young Officer, from which you may form ſome idea of the many ſubjects of wonder with which a ſtranger is ſurrounded when he enters into the ſociety of Chriſtians.

The firſt thing that attracted my attention toward this young man, was the beauty of his countenance; but the prepoſſeſſion was ſoon done away by the familiarity of his manners, and that indecorous want of reſpect toward his ſuperiors, which gave me inconceivable diſguſt. When the ſenior Chiefs opened their lips to ſpeak, inſtead of liſtening in mute attention to the words of wiſdom which proceeded from their mouths, he interrupted their diſcourſe with ſome ſally of wit, which not unfrequently preſented all they had ſaid in ſo ridiculous a point of view, as to excite the laughter of all preſent. Judge how this ſhocked and offended me? Not a day paſſed, in which he did not perform ſome wild pranks; in theſe, however, there was ſuch a mixture of pleaſantry, as to force mirth to get the better of anger. On expreſſing to Captain Grey my ſurpriſe at the lenity with which this young man

was treated, even by thoſe who ſuffered from him, he gave me to underſtand that the follies, of which I complained, were occaſioned by a diſeaſe, called, in their language, HIGH SPIRITS; a malady peculiar to the climates of Europe. This information quickly changed my averſion for the poor youth into compaſſion; but, ſurely, if this diſeaſe be very common in thoſe climates, it muſt be extremely troubleſome: how happy is it, that it is not infectious? I was very ſorry to learn that he intended being of our party to Calcutta, and avoided, as much as poſſible, having any communication with him; but my efforts were vain; his diſorder made him ſo reſtleſs, that he never remained in one part of the Budgerow for ten minutes at one time.

It would be endleſs to repeat all the fooleries of this youth, during our voyage: I ſhall only mention the following, which

will be ſufficient to give you an idea of the effects of *high ſpirits*.

It was on an evening of unparalleled beauty. The air, which had juſt been refreſhed by a North-weſter *, breathed ſweet fragrance; delightful as the recreation of friends, when the clouds of reſentment have been diſſipated by the Sun of Truth. The clear blue ſky ſaw itſelf reflected on the unruffled boſom of the Queen of Rivers. On the right hand, the lovely Goddeſs ſtretched her majeſtic waves to ſuch a diſtance, that the prominent and lofty banks, which formed her weſtern girdle, appeared to our view as a black line touching the horizon. At leſs than half a coſs diſtance on the left, a richly cultivated country ſmiled upon us, through the various openings of a Mango grove; which fre-

* A term uſed in India for a particular ſpecies of hurricane.

quently intruded upon the verdant ſlope, to kiſs the treſſes of Ganga.

We were tempted by the beauty of the evening to go on ſhore, ſomewhat ſooner than uſual: on our landing, innumerable flocks of peacocks, lorys, and other inhabitants of the grove, were in motion, who, waving their reſplendent plumage in the golden rays of the declining ſun, gave an additional charm to the graces of this lovely landſcape *.

* A late writer (Mr. Belſham, in his Reign of George the Third) in portraying the horrid deeds of our countrymen in India, and the calamitous ſtate to which that country was reduced, through their oppreſſions, thus expreſſes himſelf: 'Striking, indeed, is the contraſt between the ſituation of the country at this period, and that, which we were told it enjoyed, *in the happy times of the Mogul Government*. The kingdom of Bengal, during a long period of peaceful repoſe, is deſcribed as (*then*) exhibiting the moſt charming and picturesque ſcenery, opening into extenſive glades, covered with a fine turf, and inter-

A walk to the next village was propoſed, and agreed to by all the party, excepting one little fat man, who ſeemed,

ſperſed with woods, *filled with a variety of birds of beautiful colours; among others, peacocks in abundance,* ſitting on the vaſt horizontal branches, diſplayed their dazzling plumes to the ſun.' &c.

The benevolent reader will be happy to learn from the account of the Rajah, confirmed by the views of a late ingenious traveller (Mr. Hodges) that the race of peacocks has not been *utterly exterminated* by the cruel rapacity of the Britiſh Governors of Bengal! If the miſrepreſentations of credulity had been always reſtrained to external objects, their confutation would have been an eaſy taſk. But who can follow the hiſtorian, who pretends to expoſe the ſecret workings of the human mind, and purſues the victim of his prejudice even to the throne of God! Who, ſpeaking of the unfortunate death of a man, whoſe ſervices had been an acknowledged benefit to his country, could preſume to ſay, that 'though acquitted at the higheſt human tribunal, he could not acquit himſelf, *or hope for acquital at that far more awful tribunal at which*

upon all occaſions, to make the ſtudy of his own eaſe the principal object of his concern: and whoſe extreme ſelfiſhneſs had given frequent diſguſt to all his fellow voyagers. To him young Cooper attached himſelf, declaring that he could not think of leaving alone, in a ſtrange country, ſo valuable a gentleman. Pleaſed at this inſtance of his benevolence, we commended his good-nature, and proceeded on our walk.

Following the courſe of the tranſparent Nullah *, on whoſe banks we had landed,

he dreaded to appear!' Hiſtory of the Reign of George the Third, vol. i, page 355.

Inſtead of the quotation from Perſius, we would rather conclude ſuch a ſentence with the lines of Pope,

Let not this weak unknowing hand,
Preſume thy bolts to throw,
Or deal damnation o'er the land
On each I judge thy foe.

* Small ſtreams.

we ſoon arrived at a ſmall village, moſt of whoſe peaceful inhabitants we found buſied at their looms, beneath the friendly ſhade of a far ſpreading banyan. In one of the hundred arbours formed by the deſcending branches, ſat a muſician, who ſoftly touched the chords of a zena: to the ſweet ſound of which, the women, and children, were liſtening with mute attention.

Our approach preſented a new object to their curioſity. The muſic had ceaſed; but was renewed at the requeſt of Captain Grey, who entreated we might give no interruption, either to their labours, or amuſement.

Mean time the Chief of the village drew near, to perform the duties of hoſpitality. A young officer, who ſaw him advancing, haſtily enquired, in Engliſh, whether we could be ſupplied with milk from the vil-

lage? 'Arcaa Sahib, tamorrow Mulluk *,' replied the villager, making a profound reverence. 'To-morrow wont do for us, friend,' replied the Officer, 'we can't ſtay here all night.' And returning to Captain Grey, 'we have had a fruitleſs errand,' ſaid he, 'for the old man here, ſays, we can have no milk till to-morrow.'

The poor fellow, who had been greatly mortified by the abrupt manner in which the gentleman had received his offered civilities, now repeated them to Captain Grey in the ſame terms, who laughed very heartily at his friend, for ſuffering the caſual reſemblance between the ſound of an Engliſh and a Bengal word to lead him into ſuch a miſtake.

Having received from the village an ample ſupply of the articles we wanted,

* Is not this your country?—command in it what you pleaſe!

we returned, in ſearch of our friends, followed by a train of villagers, loaded with milk, eggs, fruit, &c.

We ſoon reached the Mango grove, but what was our ſurpriſe, on entering it, to ſee the poor fat gentleman ſtraining his unweildy limbs to graſp the trunk of a large tree, which he was attempting to climb, as faſt as his untoward bulk would permit. Panting for breath, he caſt a look of deſpair on young Cooper, who ſat perching on a bough of the ſame tree above; and whoſe voice we heard from a conſiderable diſtance, vehemently urging his corpulent companion to proceed: 'but two or three feet farther, my dear ſir, and you will be out of all danger,' cried he. The poor gentleman made an effort, but ſlipped back to the ſame ſituation. 'One other attempt, for heaven's ſake, my dear ſir,' reſumed Cooper, 'or the tyger will lay hold of your poor limbs.' 'Gra-

cious heaven!' cried the gentleman, in agony. At theſe words, he caſt a glance around, which was fully deſcriptive of the horrors of his ſituation. On perceiving us, he ſhouted out, that Cooper had ſeen a tyger: beſeeching us, at the ſame time, to aſſiſt him, and to take care of ourſelves. Captain Grey, who immediately apprehended ſome trick of young Cooper, enquired of the villagers, whether any tyger had been lately ſeen in the neighbourhood? and, being anſwered in the negative, he prevailed on the poor gentleman to deſcend. On further inveſtigation, it appeared that the young gentleman had been ſeized with a paroxyſm of his diſeaſe in our abſence, and that the ſtory of the tyger had been invented by him, in order to throw his poor unſuſpecting companion into the awkward ſituation in which he found him; and of which he produced, next morning, ſo admirable a drawing, as excited a laughter in all who ſaw it: from

me, I confeſs, it extorted an unwilling ſmile. But theſe Europeans do not ſeem to think the entertainment, that is purchaſed at the expence of the feelings of another, is too dearly paid for.

We arrived at Calcutta in the night, and went directly to the houſe of a friend of Captain Grey's, where, according to the rules of hoſpitality, eſtabliſhed in this place, we were both invited to take up our abode.

The Governor General is now in the country, and as it is not proper that I ſhould appear, till after I have been introduced to him, I ſhall have nothing of any conſequence to write for ſome days.

It has always been my intention to communicate to you a faithful copy of the firſt impreſſion made upon my mind, by every new object preſented to it; but knowing the aptitude of ignorance to fall into the path of error, I am not without apprehenſions, that, while I intend to inform, I may poſſibly miſlead. This ſhall not, however, deter me from purſuing my plan, but only render me more careful in forming my judgment.

Experience has already taught me, that the concluſions, which are formed with precipitance, are almoſt always retracted with ſhame: thus, for inſtance, when I hear theſe Chriſtians introducing, in familiar converſation, the name of their *Almighty Creator*, upon the moſt trifling occaſions; nay, ſometimes, as it would ap-

pear, merely to ſupply the lack of matter, and to fill the chaſms of converſation; I can ſcarcely forbear from accuſing them of impiety. But a moment's reflection convinces me of the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that they, who boaſt the light and privileges of a divine revelation, can be guilty of irreverence to the Supreme! I therefore conclude, that when theſe Chriſtians pronounce, with ſo much eaſe, *that Name*, which is held, by every pious Hindoo, in too great reverence to be uttered, except upon the graveſt, and moſt ſolemn occaſions; and which no faithful Muſſulman was ever known to pronounce, without a pauſe, it is from a conſciouſneſs of their own ſuperior piety, which they, doubtleſs, imagine, entitles them to this degree of familiarity with their Maker.

Another inſtance of the ſame kind has occurred to me, in an expreſſion much in uſe, the meaning of which, on applying

to the Dictionary, I found to be that of *the eternal puniſhment of the ſoul in hell!* I ſhuddered to think, how often I had heard this dreadful doom pronounced by ſome of my fellow-travellers, not only on their own ſouls, but on that of many of their brethren! but, on more maturely conſidering the matter, I found it more agreeable to the precepts of their religion, as well as to the dictates of common ſenſe, to conclude, that in my imperfect knowledge of the language, the *negative* had eſcaped me: and thus, what ſounded in my ears as the moſt dreadful imprecation, was, in reality, an ejaculation uttered in the ſpirit of that charity, which teaches to pray for their enemies, even in the moment of wrath. Looking upon it in this *proper* light, I could not but admire the fervor with which I laſt night heard many petitions of this kind preferred for the ſoul of a General Officer, who had introduced certain regulations into the ſervice,

by which theſe gentlemen conſidered themſelves aggrieved. And I make no doubt, that had the animadverſions of theſe young men been reported to him, he would have had the charity to pray for them with ſimilar fervency!

'A GREAT man,' ſaith he whoſe words are incomparable as wiſdom, 'ſhould ſpeak kindly, without meanneſs; he ſhould be valiant, without boaſting; he ſhould be generous, ſhedding his bounty into the diſh of the worthy; he ſhould be reſolute, but not raſh.' This is the character of a great man *! And ſuch a one have I this day ſeen.

* See Hetopades.

It would be vain to attempt deſcribing to you my feelings, while I ſtood in the preſence of this truly exalted perſonage. Of him, who, uniting the lofty ſpirit of the renowned Acbar *, with the penetrating, and comprehenſive genius of his ſtill more renowned miniſter, has ſhewn himſelf ſuperior to both, in ſchemes of ſound and extenſive policy; as well as in that pure, and bleſſed ſpirit of humanity, which has diſtinguiſhed every act of his adminiſtration.

The pious Hindoo, no longer forced to ſubmit to laws, that are repugnant to

* The Emperor Acbar was the cotemporary of our Queen Elizabeth, and is one of the few monarchs on whoſe character poſterity can dwell with feelings of reſpect and admiration. The choice of ſuch a miniſter as the great Abual Fazel, is a ſufficient proof of his penetration. Kindred ſouls naturally diſcover each other.

the ſpirit of his faith; no longer judged by the unhallowed ordinances of ſtrangers, beholds, with extatic gratitude, the holy Shaſter * riſing, at the command of this enlightened Governor, to be once more the ſtandard of his obedience.

The ſame benevolence, which has reſtored to our nation the invaluable privilege of being tried by our own laws, has projected the extenſion of the ſame favour to the Mahomaden inhabitants of Hindoſtan. A tranſlation of the Hedaya †, both into the Perſian and Engliſh languages, I am well aſſured, is about to take place, and thus the haughty Muſſulman will receive, from Chriſtian magnanimity, a degree of favour and protection, which the laws of his Prophet never taught him to

* Code of Gentoo Laws, tranſlated by Mr. Halhed.

† Commentary on the Muſſulman Laws, tranſlated by Mr. Hamilton.

beſtow! Surely, one ſuch act is worth a thouſand of thoſe deeds of heroes, whoſe fame is written in letters of blood, upon the fields of deſolation! juſt as it is ſaid, that 'truth being weighed againſt a thouſand *Aſhmavedajugs*, was found to be of more conſequence than the thouſand offerings.'

At the houſe of the Governor General, I was introduced, by Captain Grey, to ſeveral gentlemen, both in the civil and military departments. They were all extremely kind, and obliging to me, and appeared to be no ſtrangers to thoſe laws of hoſpitality, of which our nation has long conſidered itſelf as the excluſive poſſeſſor.

I was invited by the Governor General himſelf, to a notch, or, as they expreſs it, *a ball*; which was to be given in the evening, in a houſe appropriated to that purpoſe. On enquiry, I found that the

dancers were to be all *Engliſh*; a circumſtance that delighted me, as I have hitherto had no opportunity of ſeeing any of their females.

I waited with impatience for the hour which was to take us to the place appointed: but as neither Captain Grey, nor any of his friends, had the ſame degree of curioſity, the greater part of the company were aſſembled before we reached the room. When we entered it, amazement, and delight, took poſſeſſion of my ſoul. It is impoſſible to convey to you, by words, any idea of the beautiful objects that ſurrounded me: but you may judge of the tranſcendent power of their charms, when I tell you, that they ſhone forth with invincible luſtre, in ſpite of the deformity of a dreſs, which appears to have been invented by envy, with an intention of diſfiguring the faireſt works of nature. Theſe lovely creatures, to the number of about

one hundred, were ſeated on benches in the European faſhion, and ſmiled, and talked, to the gentlemen who addreſſed them, with great ſpirit, and vivacity: but this I did not wonder at; as I had been told by Grey, that they all either *were*, or, *had been Dancers:* and, you know, women of that profeſſion are ſeldom at a loſs for converſation.

The great man having entered, and received the compliments of the company after the manner of his nation, which conſiſts of very little ceremony, the dancing commenced. But judge of my aſtoniſhment, when I beheld the dancing girls led out—not by their maſters—but—debaſing meanneſs! each by an Engliſh Chief! Sincere as my reſpect for the Governor General certainly is, I could not reſtrain my indignation at ſeeing Chiefs, and military Commanders of high rank and authority, thus publicly degrading themſelves

by dancing for his amuſement. How inconſiſtent, thought I, is the conduct of mortals! Theſe men, who plume themſelves upon their notions of liberty, and independence, ſubmit, without reluctance, to an indignity, to which the Omrahs of the empire, who, in the days of its greatneſs, ſurrounded the royal Mumud, and proſtrated themſelves to ſalute the duſt, which was ſhaken from the feet of royalty, would ſooner have died than have ſubmitted! Though, on the part of the Engliſh Chiefs, it appeared entirely voluntary, yet I thought I could perceive that many of them felt ſufficient repugnance to this degrading buſineſs, which they went through with that ſort of heroic apathy and indifference, which you have beheld in a criminal of our nation when about to be hanged. Indeed, I never ſaw a dance ſo very little amuſing. The geſtures of the women were as little graceful as their dreſs; and had it not been for the extreme

beauty of their countenances, I confeſs, I ſhould ſoon have been tired with looking at them.

A gentleman, whom I had ſeen in the morning, told me, that his wife wiſhed to be introduced to me. The requeſt ſurpriſed me; but as I knew the gentleman to be a perſonage of high rank and character, I prepared to follow him. He conducted me to the oppoſite ſide of the room, and led me up to a group of Bibbys, whom I had miſtaken for ſuperannuated dancing girls, but whom I now, to my infinite aſtoniſhment, diſcovered to be the wives of men of rank and eminence, whoſe names, according to the cuſtom of their country, they bore. I could not find myſelf in the preſence of theſe ladies without experiencing a conſiderable degree of embarraſſment; this was by no means the caſe with them; like other females, they all ſpoke at once, and ſeemed endowed

with much loquacity. They looked at me with ſteady countenances, totally void of that modeſt timidity, which is the moſt ineſtimable gem in female beauty. That glare of colouring, which, at firſt ſight, caught my ſoul in the net of aſtoniſhment, loſt, by degrees, its power of enchantment. And as the nightingale *, after having viewed, with ſhort-lived rapture, the ſplendour of the gaudy tulip, returns with freſh delight to the contemplation of his beloved roſe; ſo did my ſoul, in the midſt of this blaze of weſtern beauty, turn to the remembrance of the gentle graces, and endearing charms of my beloved Prymaveda! The loveline ſs of eyes, ſparkling in beauty, may attract our admiration, but

* This ſimile, the Rajah ſeems to have borrowed from the Perſian. Of all the poetical fables of the Eaſt, none is ſo frequently alluded to, in the compoſitions of the Perſian writers, as that which ſuppoſes the nightingale to be violently enamoured with the roſe.

the bare recollection of thoſe which beamed with the ſoftneſs of tender affection, is yet more precious to the ſoul!

Loſt in theſe reflections, I became inſenſible to the ſcene around me; and incommoded by the extreme heat of the room, I took the firſt opportunity of departing. The green horſes of Surraya had ſeen me perform my morning ablutions in the ſacred ſtream, before my friend Grey returned from this nocturnal feſtival.

I KNOW you would deem it an unpardonable neglect, ſhould I ſay nothing to you of the city itſelf; which, under the auſpices of him who is the liberal patron

of every uſeful, and every elegant art, is already become worthy of being the capitol of an empire.

Calcutta preſents to the eye of a ſtranger, a ſpectacle, delightful from its novelty, and amuſing from the variety of its ſcenes. This city, which ſo ſhort a time ſince as the Subahſhip of Coſſim Ally Cawn, conſiſted of nothing more than a mean fort, and a few ſurrounding huts, now ſees rows of magnificent palaces, adorned by all the beauties of architecture, ſtretching along the banks of this favoured Mouth of the Ganges, to the diſtance of ſeveral miles. The extent, and grandeur, of the fortreſs, have never failed to impreſs the Aſiatic beholder with ſentiments of awe, and admiration; but all the deſcriptions we have received tended rather to give an idea of its ſtrength, than beauty: it is pre-eminent in both: and when the eye ſurveys, even but a part of this grand and maſſy ſtruc-

ture, taking in, at the ſame glance, a view of the elegant buildings of the town, ſeparated from each other by gardens, rich in vegetable beauty, the ſilver current of the river, as it is partially ſeen, gliding between the ſhips of every colour, ſhape, and nation, which here wave their various ſtreamers on its boſom; it is impoſſible for imagination to conceive a ſight more charming. Add to this, the variety to be ſeen in the ſtreets, where you behold a concourſe of people, whoſe dreſs, complexion, religion, and manners, all differ widely from each other: and whoſe numbers are ſo nearly equalled, that it is impoſſible to ſay who is the ſtranger. All appear to be at home. Here the holy Fakeer, with no other dreſs than a piece of muſlin wrapped round his lean, and ſhrivelled limbs, walks with folded arms, ruminating on ſome paſſage of the holy Shaſter, and ſtriving, by penance and mortification, to facilitate the moment of ab-

ſorption and unchanging bliſs. There the turbaned Muſſulman, from the top of an adjoining minorat, adjures the followers of Mahomet to attend the hours of devotion in the holy Moſque; while the ſtately Armenian, the money changing Jew, and the no leſs money-loving Engliſhman, mingle on the beach; too intent on their affairs of traffic, to liſten to any voice ſave that which calls to the temple of Lacſhmi *.

European chariots, various in their form, and elegant in their ſtructure, drawn by horſes decked in ſilver ſtudded harneſs, glide like meteors along the ſtreets; paſſing, in their career, the country hackery †, the heavy loaded camel, and even the majeſtic, but unweildy, elephant, who turning up his great proboſcis, wonders at the noiſe and buſtle which ſurrounds him.

* Goddeſs of Riches.

† Small covered carts, drawn by bullocks, which are in general uſe all over India.

SHALL Ignorance be for ever leading me into error? And ſhall experience never be able to defend me againſt the dangers of miſconception, and miſtake? I this morning accompanied Captain Grey into the country, in an open vehicle, called a Buggy, drawn by one horſe, which he himſelf drove. It was the firſt opportunity we had for converſation, ſince the Governor's notch; and he was anxious to know my opinion of it. 'What do you think of the ladies,' cried he; 'did you not think ſome of them very beautiful?' I anſwered, 'that as to beauty, I muſt confeſs, I thought the ladies had but a ſlender ſhare in every reſpect, *bloom*, only excepted, compared to that which adorn-

ed the dancing girls; they, indeed, were beautiful!' 'Tis them I mean,' returned he; 'you do not think I could expect you to admire the old painted witches, to whom —— introduced you?' 'I could never have thought of giving the appellation of ladies to dancing girls,' returned I, gravely. 'Dancing girls!' repeated he, burſting into a fit of laughter, 'Why the ladies, whom you ſaw dance, were, many of them, married ladies, of rank and diſtinction; the lovely Mrs. ***, and her ſtill more lovely ſiſter, were of the number.' 'Is it poſſible,' cried I, 'that men of rank can baſely contaminate their honour, by ſuffering their wives and daughters to ſtoop to the degrading employment of dancers to the G. G—'. 'Why,' returned Grey, almoſt ſuffocated with laughter, 'do you imagine they danced to pleaſe him?' 'Whom ſhould you all dance to pleaſe, but him,' rejoined I, peeviſhly, a little picqued by the ex-

ceſs of his mirth. 'Forgive me, dear Zaarmilla,' returned my companion; 'I confeſs nothing could be more natural than your miſtake: I certainly ought to have informed you, that dancing is a favourite amuſement in Europe; it forms part of the education of both ſexes, and to dance gracefully, is an accompliſhment on which women are taught to ſet a very high value: nor is it without reaſon that it is thus eſteemed, for nothing ſets off the charms of a fine woman to greater advantage. 'Did you not remark the young lady in the blue and ſilver?' continued he. 'The elegance of her figure, the gracefulneſs of all her motions, the animation that ſparkled in her eye, and the ſenſibility that glowed in her countenance. Never did—' but here a ſudden ſtop was put to the harangue: in the vehemence of his deſcription, my friend had neglected the management of the reins; the wheels of the carriage were intercepted by the ſtump of a

decayed tree, and the horſe, impatient of the interruption, begun to fret, and rear, till the love-pierced charioteer, applying his whip to the unfortunate animal, forced him to make a ſudden ſpring, which at once extricated him from confinement, and broke the carriage to pieces. We were both thrown to a conſiderable diſtance, and though neither of us received any material injury, we were ſufficiently bruiſed to make us remember *the lady in the blue and ſilver* for ſome days to come.

It is upon thoſe ſubjects which particularly excite my curioſity, that I find it moſt difficult to procure information. Captain Grey, who is always willing to

oblige me, when I call upon him for inſtruction, is naturally of ſo ſilent a diſpoſition, that I fear to trouble him by a multiplicity of queſtions. When, happily, he, of his own accord, engages in converſation, he appears to poſſeſs a mind, enriched by the ore of knowledge; adorned by the gem of taſte; and enlightened by the ſteady torch of intellect.

The war, in which his nation is at preſent engaged, is a ſubject he ſeems particularly aſſiduous to avoid: for, alas! my friend, it muſt be confeſſed to thee, that theſe Chriſtians do not always, as I have hitherto ſuppoſed, carry arms *only* to redreſs the wrongs of the injured, to aſſert the cauſe of the oppreſſed, or to defend themſelves from the invaders of their country;—they actually make war *upon one another!*

I have, in vain, ſought in their Shaſter for ſome precept that might give a ſanction to this cuſtom, for ſome incident, in the life of their great Teacher, that might afford a precedent for human butchery. But, no. Whether I turn to the life and converſation of the Founder, or to the precepts and example of his firſt followers, I find but one ſpirit—the ſpirit of peace, of love, the meekneſs of charity, and the magnanimity of forgiveneſs. How then, comes War? that ſcourge of mankind! nurſe of guilt! and parent of deſolation! How comes it to be practiſed by the profeſſors of a religion, which proclaimed 'peace on earth, and good-will toward the children of men?' I confeſs that this queſtion has greatly puzzled me; and I can ſolve it in no other way, than by ſuppoſing, that the Chriſtian Shaſter, preſented me by Percy, is *not complete:* and that an additional revelation hath, in after

times, been afforded to theſe Chriſtians: in which ſupplement to the Goſpels, it is ordained, that when a ſufficient number of Chriſtian men are united together, to form an army, a brigade, or any other military diviſion; and are dreſſed in a particular colour, blue, or ſcarlet, or a mixture of both, they ſhall be licenſed to commit murder, at the command, and by the authority, of their *religious* ſuperiors (provided they are in the regular receipt of pay for ſo doing); and that all the ſlaughter, bloodſhed, and devaſtation, ſo committed upon their *Chriſtian brethren* (for whoſe ſalvation they believe a Saviour to have deſcended from above, and in whoſe ſociety they hope to live for ever in the Kingdom of Heaven) ſhall no longer be termed, Murder; but Glory!

'By whom was conſtructed that jewel of a word, that monoſyllable, friend*?' Praiſe to Veeſhnû, for the letter I have juſt received from thee. It was brought by the Dauk from Benares, and its preſence refreſhes my ſoul.

Your apprehenſions of the inconveniences to which you think I muſt be ſubjected, among theſe Chriſtians, are without foundation. It is true, I meet with many things that would greatly ſhock me, did I not conſider, that that variety of manners, as well as of ſentiments, which is pleaſing to the ſuperior divinities, ought not to be diſpleaſing to us. I nevertheleſs cannot be eaſily reconciled to that cuſtom of devouring the fleſh of ſo many inno-

* Heetopades.

cent, and unoffending animals, whoſe lives are daily ſacrificed, in order to procure a ſhort-lived, and inelegant enjoyment, to the vitiated palates of theſe voluptuaries. The injuſtice done to theſe animals, is, however, amply revenged, by the qualities of the liquors, which it is the cuſtom to ſwallow at the concluſion of theſe cruel feaſts; and which, when taken in great quantities, ſeldom fails to pervert the ſenſes, and reduce the reaſon to a temporary level with the victims of their gluttony.

In regard to the ceremonies of the Chriſtian religion, of which you want to be informed, I am ſorry I cannot ſatisfy your curioſity. Were I unacquainted with the peculiar precepts of their Shaſter, I ſhould be ſurpriſed at the little appearance of devotion that is to be obſerved among them; but knowing that it is expreſsly commanded them to 'pray in ſecret,' and not appear unto men to faſt, my wonder is

changed into admiration at the ſtrictneſs and punctuality with which they adhere to the precept! The ſame ſecrecy is, indeed, enjoined them with regard to their acts of charity, but it muſt be confeſſed that, in this particular, they are not quite ſo ſcrupulous.

I yeſterday accompanied Captain Grey to a hall, called a coffee-houſe, where it is the cuſtom for gentlemen to meet and converſe on buſineſs, or politics. We no ſooner entered, than I obſerved the eyes of my companion to fix upon a young man of about ſeventeen or eighteen years, who ſat in a corner of the room, apparently retiring from obſervation. Melancholy and dejection were painted on a countenance, which the hand of nature had endowed with manly beauty. The meanneſs of his attire proclaimed him to be no favourite of Lackſhmi *, but his air ſeemed ſuited

* The Goddeſs of Fortune.

to a better garb. Captain Grey took up a printed paper, which lay before him, but his eyes were frequently turned toward the youth, and his mind appeared abſorbed in reflection. A perſon, at length, entered, who addreſſed the young man, by the name of Morton. 'Morton!' repeated Grey, ſpringing toward the youth, his eyes gliſtening with pleaſure, and his manly countenance animated by the glow which warmed his boſom, 'Morton,' repeated he, 'was the name of my firſt friend, my worthy tutor; and every feature tells me, that you, ſir, muſt be his ſon.' 'The reverend Mr. Morton, of ———, was my father,' returned the young man. 'Then you are the ſon of my old friend,' cried Grey, taking the young man by the hand; and you muſt look on me as a brother: but this is no place,' continued he, 'to have all my queſtions anſwered; you muſt come home with me, and let me hear every particular

reſpecting the ſituation of your family, and eſpecially that of your worthy father, who, I hope, is yet alive?' 'Alas! No;' returned Morton: 'it pleaſed Heaven to take him from us upward of ten months ago.' The tear of filial ſenſibility, which trembled in the eye of Morton, appeared to be infectious; my friend Grey ſeemed afraid of it; and taking the young man by the arm, he inſtantly led him to the houſe that is now our home.

On our arrival there, he engaged the young man to give him a recital of all that had befallen his family, ſince the period in which he had been under the tuition of his father. The relation was ſhort, and ſimple.

His father, who it ſeems was a prieſt of the order of *Curates* (for ſo, at my requeſt, he wrote the word) had, in his old age, been aſſailed by diſeaſe, and afflicted by

poverty: death, at length, came to his releaſe, and ſent him to obtain the reward of virtue in the region of felicity.

The young man, after this event, propoſed to viſit India; hoping, that in a region, which ſince the foundation of the world has been pouring out her treaſures to enrich the various countries of the earth, he might acquire a competence for the ſupport of his mother and ſiſters. With the reluctance of a fond parent, ſtruggling between the dictates of prudence, and the yearnings of affection, his mother at length yielded to his entreaty. She was the ſooner induced to do ſo, from the conſideration of the many affluent relations ſhe had in the capital; all of whom, ſhe fondly hoped, would ſtrain every nerve to promote the intereſt of her ſon. To all theſe affluent relations, ſhe wrote in his behalf, requeſting from them letters of introduction to ſome of

the great Chiefs in India, and having preſented him with theſe harbingers of future fortune, ſhe ſuffered him to depart, loaded with maternal bleſſings. On his arrival at the capital, which they call London, he did not fail to viſit thoſe relations on whom depended his proſpects of future felicity.

Some of them, having been under peculiar obligations to his father, would, he doubted not, rejoice in this opportunity of diſcharging their debt of gratitude; but it unfortunately happened, that he never could find any of them at home.

After repeated diſappointments, he wrote to each of them, encloſing his mother's letters to them; and after many days of anxious ſolicitude, he received the anſwers of thoſe on whom his hopes had been principally placed. They all grieved at not having it in their power to ſerve him:

they could not but be ſorry, extremely ſorry, that he had ſet out in the moſt unlucky moment poſſible: for one had juſt procured an appointment for the ſon of his taylor, and could not again trouble his friends in power with a ſimilar application. Another had lately made it a point never to ſolicit any thing, for any perſon out of his own family. A third, had given up, ſome years ago, all correſpondence with India; and a fourth, had made a recent vow, never to plague his friends with letters of introduction. Mortified, and diſpirited, with theſe various diſappointments, he was on the point of giving up the purſuit; when his landlady, who had formerly lived in his father's pariſh, informed him, that her daughter's huſband had a friend, who was intimately acquainted with a butcher, who had a vote in a borough, of which one of the Directors of that company of Merchants, who have become the Soverei ns of ſo great a part of India, was

the repreſentative; by this train of intereſt ſhe hoped to do ſomething for him. (The good woman's hopes, and honeſt endeavours, were not fruſtrated.) Through the friend of her daughter's huſband, ſhe procured for him an introduction to the ſlayer of cattle, who prevailed with the Director, to favour the Curate's ſon with a letter of introduction to one of the Engliſh Chiefs at this place; and, at the ſame time, gave him an order for his paſſage in one of the Company's ſhips.

His ſufferings on the voyage were many, but his ardour was invincible. Immediately on his arrival at Calcutta, he preſented the letter, on which was founded all his future hopes; but, alas! what was his mortification, on being told, by the great man to whom it was addreſſed, that it was only one of a hundred applications of the ſame kind, the twentieth part of which it

was utterly impoſſible for him to attend to!

In a land of ſtrangeſs, without friends, and without bread, too modeſt to ſolicit, and too proud to bear the harſhneſs of repulſe, without feeling its indignity, is it to be wondered that he was reduced to deſpondency?

It was at this period, in the moment of dejection and deſpair, that he was diſcovered by the worthy friend of Percy, in whom he has, indeed, found a brother.

This incident ſeems to have entirely baniſhed that ſilence, and reſerve, which I have hitherto conſidered as natural to the temper of my friend. Rouſed by the ardour of friendſhip, he exerted, in its cauſe, all his eloquence and activity; and, in two days, procured for the young man an appointment, which will ſoon enable him to

return the obligations he owes to parental tenderneſs, with the ſubſtantial proofs of filial affection.

I HAVE for ſome days laboured under an indiſpoſition, which has kept me from going abroad. The moſt mortifying circumſtance attending my confinement, is the deprivation of the pleaſure I promiſed myſelf, in accompanying Grey to the houſes of ſome noble Saibs, where numbers of Bibbies were aſſembled. By the accounts I received from him, on his return from theſe parties, I could eaſily perceive that the remembrance of the bruiſes, we received in our fall, had not been able to give him any antipathy to the lady in the *blue and ſilver*. As often as he was diſap-

pointed in his expectations of ſeeing her at any of thoſe feaſts, the diſappointment was viſible in his countenance, and he cut ſhort all enquiries, by declaring, that the viſit had been *very ſtupid*. But if the evening was ſpent in her preſence, hilarity ſmiled in every feature, and joyfulneſs beamed from his eyelids.

I longed to ſee a female, capable of making ſo deep an impreſſion, on a mind ſo ſolid; and as ſoon as I was able to go abroad, I accepted, with eagerneſs, an invitation to the houſe of a friend, where ſhe, and many other ladies, were expected to ſpend the evening. Captain Grey had, in his impatience, ordered our Pallenkeens at ſo early an hour, that we were at his friend's houſe long before any other gueſt appeared. The ladies, at length, came; and I recognized the features of ſeveral whom I had ſeen at the notch; but methought they appeared more modeſt, as

well as more beautiful, than when I miſtook them for dancing girls, ſo much is our opinion under the dominion of our imagination. I was now eager to liſten to their diſcourſe, and delighted in the expectation of hearing words of wiſdom proceeding from the lips of beauty. Wiſe might be the words they uttered, and truly edifying their converſation; but, unhappily for me, I was too ignorant of the topics they diſcuſſed, to receive much benefit.

Two ladies, who had juſt arrived from England, engroſſed the greateſt ſhare of the diſcourſe: innumerable queſtions were put to them, which they anſwered with great quickneſs and volubility. In the courſe of their converſation, frequent mention was made of *public places*; by which I underſtand inſtitutions, ſimilar to thoſe formerly eſtabliſhed at Athens, where the renowned Socrates, Plato, Zeno, &c. initiated their diſciples in the myſteries of

wiſdom and philoſophy: whatever are the ſciences taught at thoſe modern ſeminaries of taſte and learning, the minds of theſe ladies ſeemed to have acquired the moſt lively reliſh for them; and the name of Veſtris * (who I take to be one of the principal of their inſtructors) was never mentioned without the epithet of delightful! charming! divine!

It is not ſurpriſing, that to theſe females, ſo well inſtructed, ſo learned, and ſedate, ſhould be entruſted the moſt important concerns of the ſtate. Such an one's having *had an affair* with a certain great man, was frequently mentioned: but ſo great was the modeſty of theſe ladies, that not one of them ever hinted at having *had an affair* with any great man herſelf.

While I was employed in liſtening to this converſation, my friend Grey was

* A celebrated Opera Dancer.

too much occupied with the young lady, whoſe charms had captivated his heart, to pay attention to any other object. In converſing with her, he ſeemed inſpired with unuſual eloquence; and I was happy to perceive that the fair maiden appeared not inſenſible to his attention; but ſmiled upon him with angel-like ſweetneſs and complacency.

I have already obſerved to you, that nothing can be more awkward, and ungraceful, than the dreſs of theſe females; their robes, inſtead of falling in eaſy and graceful folds around their limbs, are extended on huge frames, made of bamboo, or ſome ſimilar material, and gives to their figure very much the ſhape of a Moor Punky *. The only uſeful ornament they have, is a Choury †, which, inſtead

* A country veſſel of a peculiar conſtruction, uſed for the conveyance of cotton and other bulky articles.

† A bunch of feathers uſed to drive away the flies.

of being carried in the hands of their attendants, is ſtuck in the heads of the ladies, where, by the continual motion, it is of great utility in driving off the flies, which are here much more troubleſome and offenſive than in Kuttaher.

After ſome time was ſpent in converſation, many of the company ſat down to cards: that which Sheermaal ignorantly pronounced *a ſpecies of worſhip*; being, in reality, no other than an amuſement, invented by the Europeans, as cheſs was by our anceſtors, for the paſtime of the rich, and idle. Judge, then, what degree of credit is due to the repreſentations of that arrogant Bramin, when he aſſerts, that many of the females of the Weſt, make this paſtime the chief buſineſs of their exiſtence, ſacrificing to it the duties they owe to ſociety, as wives, as mothers, as rational and intelligent creatures. Baſe ſlan-

derer! how little doth he know of the ladies of England!

I HAVE omitted no opportunity of procuring from the young friend of Captain Grey, ſome degree of information reſpecting the order of the Prieſthood, to which his father belonged. Theſe Prieſts, when ſpoken of collectively, are called *the Church*; and have the precedence of the Sovereign, as may be inferred from the uſual mode of expreſſion, *Church and King*.

From the converſation of Morton and his friend, I am convinced that to preſerve the primitive purity of their religion, is

the firſt object of attention to the Engliſh Government. To aſcertain the virtues of thoſe, who are devoted to the ſacred function, they are deſtined to undergo trials of no common kind. Worldly riches and honours are held out, not as rewards to virtue; but rather as means of proving the degree of pride, venality, hypocriſy, meanneſs, &c. of the individuals; and as they are carefully withheld from all, who have not given unequivocal proofs of ſome of theſe qualifications, men of modeſt virtue, and rigid integrity, run no riſk of being ſpoiled by the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

By theſe humble, and lowly men, are performed all the moſt ſacred, and important, duties of their function. Theſe inſtruct the ignorant, comfort the afflicted, viſit the ſick. It is the prayers of theſe, which aſcend to the throne of the Eternal; and it is theſe, likewiſe, who from their

ſlender ſtore, impart relief to the children of indigence.

Such were the duties performed by the father of Mr. Morton, who, according to Grey, added to the virtues of a Chriſtian Prieſt, the learning of a true philoſopher. This excellent man was never moleſted by the offer of what is called *preferment*, but was permitted to exert his ſuperiour talents and virtues in a ſtate of poverty, equal to that of the firſt teachers of Chriſtianity.

Thus is the purity of the Prieſthood preſerved. The leaſt worthy of its members are provided for in this world; and thoſe, whoſe labours have been truly beneficial to mankind, who have diffuſed knowledge by their writings; inſpired the love of virtue, by their precepts; and taught the practice of it, by their example, are permitted to look for their reward in the world to come!

'In this world,' ſays the philoſopher, 'the wealthy are every one, every where, and at all times, powerful. Riches being the foundation of preferment, and an introduction to the favour of the Prince *.' It is likewiſe, here, a neceſſary introduction to the favour of the ladies.

My poor friend Grey returned this morning from the houſe, which is the reſidence of his charmer, in a ſtate of indeſcribable agitation. Vexation, diſpleaſure, and diſappointment, were written in ſuch legible characters on his countenance, that they could neither be concealed, nor miſ-

* See Hetopades.

taken. I ſoon diſcovered that his uneaſineſs had ariſen from that ſex, whoſe ficklenеſs, and infidelity, have been the theme of the ſatiriſts of a thouſand generations.

We are told, by the ſages, 'that women have been at all times inconſtant, even among the celeſtials; and that the ſecurity for their virtue, is neither a preciſe behaviour, nor a modeſt countenance, but depends ſolely on the want of ſuitors *.' Theſe are words of gall, flowing from the heart of the diſappointed! It was not, however, on the fickleneſs of the ſex, that my friend poured forth the invectives of his wrath; it was upon their avarice, and ambition.

Had I given credit to his aſſertions, I ſhould have conſidered all the young Bibbies of Calcutta, as votaries of Lackſhmi †;

* See Hetopades,

† The Goddeſs of Riches.

and that, with them, 'no man is handſome, none ugly, none virtuous, valiant, or wiſe, but *but as he is rich.*'

The ſmiles of the lady in the blue and ſilver, which gladdened the heart of my friend, were not beſtowed upon him, but upon the fortune, which, by the miſcheivous folly of young Cooper, ſhe was led to imagine he poſſeſſed. Charmed by her affability, and miſled by the complacency with which ſhe received his attentions, my friend aſſured himſelf of having a place in her heart. His fortune is not large, but he imagined it ſufficient to preclude every inconvenience; and indulged himſelf, in forming the moſt enchanting picture of domeſtic felicity. He went out this morning, with an intention of imparting his ſcheme of happineſs to her, on whoſe approbation it was to depend. He was chagrined, at hearing ſhe was not at home: but was met at the gate, by the maſter of

the houſe, who is brother-in-law to the lady, and who politely entreated him to return. How great was his ſurpriſe, on entering the apartment, to which he was led by the gentleman, to ſee the fair object of his paſſion, ſeated beſide a rich civilian, to whom fortune has made amends for the ſparing boons of nature; and on whom, the young Bibby ſmiled with the ſweeteſt complacency. Poor Grey, ſtunned by this appearance, was yet more embarraſſed by the diſtant coldneſs with which ſhe returned his ſalutations. He did not long remain in a ſituation ſo cruelly mortifying, but caſting a look of contempt on his miſtreſs, haſtily withdrew.

He was met, in the anti-chamber, by young Cooper, who, reading in the countenance of the rejected lover all that had paſſed, burſt into a loud laugh. 'So, ſhe has diſcovered the trick,' cried he, 'I could lay a hundred guineas, by the woeful

length of your countenance, that ſhe has found us out.' Grey, who was in no humour to be trifled with, quickly put an end to his mirth, and forced from him an explanation of the circumſtances to which he alluded. Cooper confeſſed to him, that the very evening on which the lady was firſt introduced to his acquaintance, he had mentioned him to her, as the worthy poſſeſſor of *many lacks*.

Piqued at being thus made the dupe of the miſchievous trick of a boy, and the ſcorn of an ambitious woman, he rails at the whole ſex, without conſidering, that diſappointment is, moſt frequently, the 'fruit of the tree of our own planting.' He knew not the character of this damſel—but ſhe was beautiful; and he aſſured himſelf it muſt be excellent! He knew not from whom her mind had received the light of inſtruction—but ſhe danced gracefully; and he gave her credit for every ac-

compliſhment. She ſmiled upon him—and was it poſſible to doubt her diſcernment? The qualities, which alone conſtitute the affectionate wife, the faithful friend, the tender mother, were the ſpontaneous offspring of his own impaſſioned fancy. Born of error, how could they be expected to live to maturity?

This affair has given me much pain, on account of the wound it has inflicted on the feelings of my friend; and, for my own part, I grieve to find, that theſe lovely females of England, are not totally free from imperfection!

Having juſt had notice, of an opportunity of diſpatching this packet, I haſtily bring it to a concluſion.

May the errors of others teach us wiſdom, and while the waters of experience

flow through our hearts, may they fructify and enrich the ſoil! The bleſſing of thy father reſt upon thee.

What can I ſay more?

LETTER XI.

From the SAME, *to the* SAME.

SINCE I laſt held the reed that is dedicated to friendſhip, my ſoul has been toſſed in the whirlwind of conflicting paſſions. My deſires have been at variance with each other. Friendſhip calls me to Almora, while the inſatiable thirſt of curioſity, the love of knowledge, and of novelty, all unite in prompting me to the hazardous undertaking of an European voyage.

Full of dangers, and of difficulties, as this ſtep may appear to you, no obſtacle

preſents itſelf to my view, half ſo formidable as thy diſapprobation. But why ſhould a difference of opinion between men of ſound principles cauſe a breach of friendſhip? 'The ſtalk of the Lotus may be broken, and the fibres remain connected:' and are not the fibres of affection, that unite *our* hearts, of a ſtill ſtronger texture?

Let not the length of the voyage, or the conſideration of its dangers, give any uneaſineſs to the breaſt of my friend; for 'what is too great a load for thoſe who have ſtrength? What is diſtance, to the indefatigable? What is a foreign country, to thoſe who have ſcience? Who is a ſtranger, to thoſe who have the habit of ſpeaking kindly*?'

Every thing I have ſeen, every thing I have heard, ſince I have been in this place,

* See Hetopades, page 93.

has tended to create doubt, and aggravate curioſity. My opinion of the morals and manners of Chriſtians, formed upon the precepts contained in their Shaſter, has been frequently ſtaggered by the obſervation of practices, inconſiſtent with its ſimplicity; and the knowledge of actions, irreconcilable to the tenor of its precepts.

It is true, theſe inſtances are not univerſal; and that by far the greater number of thoſe with whom I converſe, are men who, though they have not the words of their Shaſter often in their mouths, ſeem to have imbibed a part of its ſpirit in their hearts. Indeed, the extreme delicacy obſerved by the Chriſtians of this place, in regard to the expreſſion of religious ſentiment, is ſo univerſal, that I do not wonder, that to ſuch a ſuperficial obſerver as Sheermaal, it ſhould have appeared doubtful whether they really had any religion at all.

This amiable modeſty, which, no doubt, originates in that reſpect for the opinions of their Muſſulman, and Hindoo friends, which renders them anxious not to hurt their feeling: by an oppoſition of ſentiment, is carried to ſuch a length, that they, who generouſly extol the wiſdom of Zoroaſter, the morality of the Koran, and the ſublimity of the Veda, make no more mention of the energetic eloquence of Paul, or the beautiful ſimplicity of the Goſpels, than if they were actually ignorant of both!

But to return to the more immediate ſubject of this letter. I have not determined on the important ſtep I am about to take, without weighing well all the arguments which I thought you could adduce againſt it.

The loſs of Caſt, which to you appears ſo formidable, has, I confeſs, to me loſt

many of its terrors. I have made it the endeavour of my life, to act in the manner that to me appeared moſt conformable to the will of the omniſcient Spirit, the eternal Brahma, and '*he*,' ſaith Kriſhna, '*he is my ſervant, he is dear to me, who is free from enmity; merciful; and exempt from pride, and ſelfiſhneſs: who is the ſame in pain, and in pleaſure; patient of wrongs; contented, and whoſe mind is fixed on me alone* *.'

Can this Being, whoſe animating ſpirit is ſpread abroad over the whole univerſe! can he behold with diſpleaſure, the attempt of any of his creatures, to explore the varied forms of being which partake of his eſſence? Doth not this All-pervading, Life-giving ſoul of univerſal nature, reſide in the piercing regions of the north, as well as in thoſe which are favoured with the ſmiles of Surraya? And, doth not the

* See Bhagvat Geeta.

knowledge of his truth exalt the children of Brahma more than the deſcent of a thouſand Avators?

Let then Maandaara reſt aſſured, that in quitting, for a ſeaſon, the favoured land of Hindoſtan, Zaarmilla doth nothing contrary to the ſpirit of our religion: and as for the cenſures of the bigotted, and illiberal, I regard them not. 'He,' ſaith the Prince of Goverdhan, 'is my beloved, of whom mankind is not afraid, and who is not afraid of mankind: who is unſolicitous about events, and to whom praiſe and blame are as one *.'

But, in truth, from the Bramins I have little to apprehend. I have given orders, that the gifts I have ſo liberally beſtowed, may be continued; ſo that the accuſtomary Poojah may be regularly performed in my abſence; and I have ſent them ſuch reaſons

* See Mahhabbarat.

for my departure, as, I make no doubt, will perfectly ſatisfy them.

It is thou Maandaara, it is thou, that art entruſted with the hope of Zaarmilla's heart. My ſon! the tender pledge of the love of Prymaveda, I confide to thy care: my confidence is in thy virtue, and in the tender affection of my ſiſter. I was a father to her tender years, ſhall ſhe not be a mother to thoſe of my child?

May the Ruler of the Devas keep thee from evil! May Vrheſhpatee watch over thy dwelling, and the bountiful Lackſhmi load thee with her bleſſings.

What can I ſay more?

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.